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HOW THEY STRIKE ME,
THESE AUTHORS.

"One of the last of THE SUN's reviews was a criticism of the novels of Anthony Trollope, which may be said to have been the first critical essay that satisfactorily defines that popular author's place in English literature. There have been several similar critical articles in THE SUN which should be sufficient to give that journal as distinguished a character as Sainte-Beuve gave to the paper with which he was so long connected."

Brooklyn Union.

HOW THEY STRIKE ME,

THESE AUTHORS.

BY

J. C. HEYWOOD, A.M., L.L.B.,

AUTHOR OF "HERODIAS," "ANTONIUS," "SALOME," "HOW WILL IT END?"
ETC., ETC.



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HOW THEY STRIKE ME THESE AUTHORS.

THE CROWN OF THE WORK.

THE PARISIANS, Lord Lytton's last composition, is a worthy crown to the work of a long, busy, and uncommonly successful life. The fragment entitled "Pausanias, the Spartan," was indeed published last of all, after Lord Lytton's death, but chiefly composed many years before that event.

It is a rare thing that the later writings of a prolific author should be his best, should even hold an equal rank with those which made and established his fame. This thing Lord Lytton achieved. Not a few of the most competent critics will esteem his final work, considered from every point of view, superior to anything of its class which he had previously done. Long ago he had accomplished enough for fame—fame that made his name familiar to the best intelligence of two continents. Yet his industry never languished. Within the period of about forty-

six years, commencing when he was twenty-one and ending with his death, he wrote more than forty books, a number of pamphlets, made some important translations, and was for some time editor of a monthly magazine, besides serving as a not undistinguished member of Parliament for more than fifteen years, and afterward as a Cabinet Minister. Novelist, poet, dramatist, essayist, artist, a scholar, a statesman given rather to the study than to the practice of politics, he was at the same time no mean metaphysician, no despicable philosopher. Acquainted with much abstruse and obsolete learning, especially that which most stimulates the imagination, he was fascinated by the mysteries dwelling in that "cloud-land" which bounds ordinary natural phenomena and the regular experience of life. Sometimes seemingly carried off his feet thereby, he always returned safely and planted himself firmly on the solid foundations of common sense, making his base broader and stronger without diminishing his reach into the regions of fancy. Toying with, examining, using, as an artist, so much of forbidden knowledge, so much of visionary theories, so much of unclassified wonders as suited his purpose, yet he always did so as a master magician, never as the weak and trembling wretch who is torn and destroyed by the strange powers which he has too daringly evoked. Truly, Lord Lytton was a man of many sides, capable of showing many phases, inclined in his youth to exhibit but the thinner ones, to the discerning plainly

a crescent, growing steadily on, till full and round and mellow he sank beneath the horizon, never to come back again.

To say, in the sense used above, that a man is many-sided, means that he has in himself the germs of many characters; that by the force of his genius these may be presented to the comprehension of others as so many distinct personages. The works of all English writers except Shakspeare mark more or less definitely the limits of their powers in this respect; that is, the number and kind of characters which they could bring into view. Between many of their creations family resemblances may be discovered, and they all move within parallel planes more or less elevated and more or less widely separated. Lord Lytton preferred the higher levels. He had no sympathy with vulgarity of any kind, either of the rich or of the poor; could see in it nothing ludicrous or amusing. Whether his characters were of patrician or plebeian birth he endowed them with a certain natural delicacy and refinement. He liked elegance, and, so far as was consistent with the artistic principles which governed his compositions, he filled his world with elegant people. In youth this predilection and the egotism natural to that period of life pushed him to the verge of affectation, that is, of foppery; in his maturer years it fostered in him a kind of mild, genial, æsthetic epicureanism. He has always a kindly feeling for a man given to the most delicate enjoyments of the

palate, sympathizes with him who finds pleasure in an exquisite toilet, but cherishes more lovingly him whose chief gratifications are those of the intellect, who esteems genius and takes delight in the contemplation of its beautiful creations.

With the lapse of years he seemed to grow into a health of mind and body more robust than that of his youth; nerves and muscles became stronger without losing their sensitiveness, so that he could generously admire a young fellow who would rough it for pleasure, and upon occasion, like Kenelm Chillingly, liek a bully. He hates slang, loves common and vigorous Anglo-Saxon words and idioms. He takes only brief note of trifles, rarely descends far into details. In sketching a landscape he sees only the more picturesque and nobler objects, uses only so many strokes of his pencil as are necessary to make these distinct. He cannot let the ideal form and beauty of the composition escape him and concentrate his enthusiasm on some unsightly, trivial thing, because minute search detects it in the scene. Yet for him all nature seemed to have a kind of intelligence and sensibility. He had a sort of unconfessed pagan feeling, not a belief, that Dryades, Oreades, Naiades lived, enjoyed, and suffered. The philosophical turn of his mind led him to generalize, to extract the essence of a class and crystallize it. He liked better from many models to compose one Venus than to make the most truthful copies of many fish-wives. His imagination did not seize one phase of a low or

eccentric character, fix it, play with it, make a puppet of it, pull the wires and laugh immoderately at the mechanical repetition of the same words, grimaces, gestures. When his plan necessarily comprises an eccentric personage the character has several phases and is not vulgar. Even in people of the baser and more ignorant kind he likes gradually to develop latent refinement.

In his more recent works especially, this disposition to call passive worth into action, to educe excellence by the discipline of circumstances, to bring good to the surface, is strongly indicated. Though, while young, egotism and ambition may have tempted him to seek fame for its own sake by the means which appeared to him most likely to arrest honorable attention, he seems never to have lost sight of the purpose he had in view when he wrote "*Pelham*." "It struck me that it would be a new, a useful, and perhaps a happy moral, to show in what manner we might redeem and brighten the common-places of life; to prove (what is really the fact) that the lessons of society do not necessarily corrupt, and that we may be both men of the world, and even to a certain degree men of pleasure, and yet be something wiser—nobler—better." He had then, by the composition of "*Mortimer*," "*Falkland*," and some sketches of a like kind, rid his youthful bosom, to a good measure at least, of its "perilous stuff," a false and mawkish sentiment, not untainted with a sickly misanthropy, "common enough to all young minds

in their first bitter experience of the disappointments of the world." Any overstraining and weakness of sentiment apparent in his earlier, has been more than atoned by the manly strength and practical wisdom of his later works.

The apothegms scattered through his books, particularly those written in the decline of life, if collected into one volume would alone entitle him to a high rank as a careful and universal observer, a profound and acute thinker and analyst, a liberal-minded and proficient philosopher. With increasing years the desire to be useful grew stronger within him, and more completely regulated the action of his powers. To his maturer vision well-directed genius and talent were the worthiest things to be found among men's titles to distinction. Genius he venerated, and for it always enforced respect. Notwithstanding his own advantages of birth and station he was a model republican in the world of letters, or, rather, a model aristocrat, giving the highest places to the best. Superior mental capacity well used rendered some of his characters, though of humble birth, peers of the proudest; and by a like exercise of similar faculties the noble showed his best claim to honor. He loved ideality not only for its beauty but for its usefulness. He made it practical, in accordance with the bent of his mind; for he was a dramatic poet as well as a novelist, and a great authority has said that "the dramatic poet is eminently practical." Doubtless he understood that

ideality is actually, in some sense, as real as any other quality of the human intellect; and that the realists are inconsistent with their own theories when they strive to eliminate it. At any rate he gives these gentlemen some hard knocks in a very entertaining way, showing, among other things, that men and women are constantly practising ideality,—that is, acting a part.

“Real women! I never met one. Never met a woman who was not a sham—a sham from the moment she is told to be pretty behaved, conceal her sentiments, and look fibs when she does not speak them.”

It is Kenelm Chillingly who speaks here. But the heroine of “The Parisians” writes likewise to a friend:

“The impression left on my mind by the performances I witnessed is that the French people are becoming dwarfed. The comedies that please them are but pleasant caricatures of petty sections in a corrupt society. They contain no large types of human nature; their witticisms convey no luminous flashes of truth; their sentiment is not pure and noble—it is a sickly and false perversion of the impure and ignoble into travesties of the pure and the noble.

“Great dramatists create great parts. One great part, such as Rachel would gladly have accepted, I have not seen in the dramas of the young generation. I do not complain so much that French taste is less refined. I complain that French intellect is lowered. The descent from Polyeucte to Ruy Blas is great, not so much in the poetry of form as in the elevation of thought; but the descent from Ruy

Blas to the best drama now produced is out of poetry altogether, and into those flats of prose which give not even the glimpse of a mountain top."

As a dramatic poet Lord Lytton mourned the decadence of the spirit and the art poetical. Not by his poems alone has he proved himself a poet; his novels show him to be such. "Harold," for instance, is a grand historical tragedy, a poem in prose, the poetic form distinctly visible through the graceful folds of its drapery.

He himself early avowed his indebtedness to art.

"I studied with no slight attention the great works of my predecessors, and attempted to derive from that study certain rules and canons to serve me as a guide; and, if some of my younger contemporaries whom I could name would only condescend to take the same preliminary pains that I did, I am sure that the result would be much more brilliant. It often happens to me to be consulted by persons about to attempt fiction, and I invariably find that they imagine they have only to sit down and write. They forget that art does not come by inspiration, and that the novelist, dealing constantly with contrast and effect, must, in the widest and deepest sense of the word, study to be an artist."

Hence every character in any one of his novels was designed with artistic reference to all the others and to the entire plan of the work. They were drawn and arranged so as to be in proportion and harmony with the grand outlines of the structure. His compositions are not to be examined and judged

piecemeal, but in their integrity. His characters are contrasts and foils to each other, so disposed that whatever they do or say has a sufficient motive and adds some necessary part in the rounded whole. Their discussions of politics, ethics, æsthetics, or other dry subjects, are not essays interpolated by the author, but a part of the action, made interesting because on the conclusions reached by them the conduct and therefore the fate of the characters is seen in some measure at least to depend. These characters are not wanting in distinctness, individuality, consistency, vitality. Yet they may seem to lack these qualities to a person who accepts as models more striking automata going through an unvarying series of extravagant actions, puppets repeating the same words with unchanging inflections and eccentric movements, and grotesque caricatures. A caricature may attract attention when a portrait would be passed without notice. Nevertheless the portrait is truer to nature. An eccentric, an ill-bred, or a repulsive man might make himself observed and remembered where a gentleman would not be especially remarked. Hence, to many readers, Lord Lytton's characters seem to want the strongly-marked individuality found by them in the works of some of his contemporaries. Doubtless the result of such injudicious comparisons has often been to deprive him of commendation fairly earned and to bring on him ill-advised disparagement.

He had set thoughts and phrases, and his favorite

families or classes of good and bad people, which suggest the fixed course and limits of his creative powers. They appear, one after another, in his successive works, through which their relationship may be traced. But in dealing with them he seems always to have acted more or less rigidly, according to a rule recently formulated by a distinguished critic, as follows: "The only means of composing a natural and solid whole is to write the history of a passion, or of a character, to take them up at their birth, to see them increase, alter, become destroyed, to understand the inner necessity of their development." His imagination, which never seemed to flag, was strong, vivid, wide, and far-reaching; his style, with rare exceptions, pure; his diction uniformly elegant. Indeed, the diction of his personages may appear too uniform, lacking in variety of style and individual peculiarities. But then most of his characters belong to the well-bred and educated world, where all persons talk alike.

He was no bigot, no fanatic. He believed in real progress; not in revolution or theories which, from their very nature, were impracticable or destructive. He had no sympathy with those who fancy that any movement is an advance, and that the more violent the movement the greater the progress must be.

"There is no sign of old age in this country, sir; and thank heaven we are not standing still!"

"Grasshoppers never do; they are always hopping and jumping, and making what they think "progress" till

(unless they hop into the water and are swallowed up prematurely by a carp or a frog) they die of the exhaustion which hops and jumps naturally produce. May I ask you, Mrs. Saunderson, for some of that rice pudding?"

Yet he would have the dead past bury its dead, and every man, whatever his rank, station, or the traditions of his family, act so wisely that his advantages of mind and position should be turned to the best account, improving, controlling, establishing. Especially in his last work does he exhibit statesmanlike views of no cheap or illiberal kind,—the political wisdom garnered during a long association with eminent politicians, and by personally observing the practical workings of different systems of polity, as well as the drift and the questions of political discussion among the people at large.

So far as a fruitful author expresses himself in his creations that expression is not found in one work, or in one character, but in all. The mature Lord Lytton is, however, probably more completely set forth in "The Parisians" than in any other of his books. The seeming affectation, insincerity, mysticism, cynicism expressed in subtle irony, of his early days, has disappeared, and the ripe man stands before us undisguised, strong, hearty, healthy, liberal, sincere, earnest, a kindly guide, philosopher, and friend. As one says who held the most affectionate and intimate relations with him,—

"The satire of his earlier novels is a protest against false social respectability; the humor of his later ones is a pro-

test against the disrespect of social realities. By the first he sought to promote social sincerity and the free play of personal character; by the last to encourage mutual charity and sympathy among all classes on whose inter-relation depends the character of society itself."

But the change was something more than one of purpose here so clearly and truthfully stated; it was that produced by the ripening, enriching, and uniform perfecting of a full, a many-sided character; and from this stronger, more exuberant, more equably teeming soil sprang the broader, higher, more robust purpose.

The plan of "The Parisians," and the scene and time of its action, were so chosen that practical questions of the highest interest and importance, both political and social, were necessarily discussed by the characters, and illustrated by their conduct and their careers. The curtain rises at Paris in the early spring of 1869. The personages are many. First appears a young legitimist marquis from Brittany, poor, proud, holding himself aloof from politics until Henry V. shall have his rights, his head filled with old-time notions of what a gentleman may and may not do, ignorant of Paris, to which he has just come, and of the great active world which he had never before entered; but withal honorable, upright, sensible,—subject nevertheless to temptations in common with all men. With, and as a foil to him, comes a person of undistinguished birth, energetic, intelligent, educated, kind-hearted, a good fellow, who

makes the best of things as he finds them, earns money, and will use it for a friend. Later a cynical count enters, one who adheres, theoretically at least, and practically in a kind of negative way, to the Orleans family. Two rival bankers, the one of patrician the other of plebeian parentage, have not unimportant parts. In contrast with these busy men are nobles of the Faubourg St. Germain, looking down on the Emperor and his government, always conscious of their pedigree, doing nothing in and enjoying nothing of Paris but its pleasures. Harmonizing these contrasts, like intermediate colors in a picture, are other nobles of the same quarter, somewhat more practical, going in for the main chance in a clandestine way. Another member of the same family of nobles represents still another class. Himself guiltless, to save an indiscreet but distinguished lady's reputation he confesses that he has done what must banish him from the society of all reputable men, from Paris, from France. He changes his name, wanders through the world, meeting with many adventures, always conducting himself bravely, honorably, and returns to Paris, still in disguise, to conspire with socialists, communists, and any discontented persons of whom he may make instruments for the destruction of the Emperor and the overthrow of the Empire. Yet another class is represented by a duchess of the same family on the one side, on the other descended from one of the first Napoleon's marshals, a strong partisan of the Em-

pire and admirer of Napoleon III. A high-bred young Englishman, distinguished by his talents as a writer, in knowledge a man of the world, in sentiments pure and noble, in character unsullied, plays the lover's part. Charged with a secret mission in the result of which he is mysteriously interested, he searches almost hopelessly for the person whom, more than himself, that mission concerns. At first sight conceiving an overpowering love for a woman of whose name even he is ignorant, when he becomes acquainted with and finds her worthy of all homage and affection he feels bound in honor not to do anything to win her love, at least till the result of his mission shall be known to himself. Yet unconsciously he makes his passion evident to the delicate, sensitive, poet-girl, whose heart secretly responds to his throb for throb. A learned, shrewd, witty, manly, professed critic and man of letters, and his intelligent, amiable, sympathizing wife show talent in healthy action. A young poet, effeminate, unstable, half consumed by absinthe, without principles, ready to write whatever is likely to give him most notoriety in regard either to politics or religion or for the destruction of both, shows talent morbidly active. These are admirably contrasted types of Parisian literary men. A prosperous lawyer, who helps his rich client to pluck his poor client, acts a part not found alone in this drama. A clever American colonel, into whose mouth are put some supposed Americanisms amusingly ill chosen, and for the most part

incomprehensible to Americans save for the author's marginal explanations ; this colonel's bright, pretty, and admired spouse, who of course talks of women's rights, but is at the same time the most dutiful, submissive, and affectionate wife, are good enough specimens of the American residents in Paris. A quiet, thoughtful, sensible, liberal-minded German count moves somewhat in the background. The good, generous, beautiful girl-poet, full of genius and the best kind of common sense, with whom the high-bred Englishman falls in love, is the heroine. Her companion, an Italian artist once, now a music-teacher, a tender, affectionate woman with characteristic foibles and whims ; another girl, young, just from school, ingenuous, sweet, a banker's daughter ; a handsome young woman of the nameless class, the poet's sweetheart, concealing grand, womanly qualities within her soiled character ; some good men and women of the lower middle class ; some socialists, communists, conspirators ; some specimens of the wasps, drones, and hangers-on of society,—such, with those more important already named, are the materials which the author brings in contact, unites, incorporates, makes plastic, and forms into a well-proportioned group, a drama, and that drama is what Paris was from the spring of 1869 to the end of the communistic rule, or rather riot, in the city.

The work was never quite finished. It was in some sense like the last speech of a dying man, and it ends with incomplete phrases, broken sentences.

The narrative is interrupted toward the close by gaps, periods of silence, during which the action moves on unnoticed. Yet such action and its conclusion are indicated in this way with sufficient clearness to satisfy curiosity and in a great measure content the reader.

The book is thoroughly interesting. The winding courses of love and political intrigues mingle their currents, and run on with accelerated movement to the common termination. In its completeness is presented a graphic sketch of "the bravest, the most timid, the most ferocious, the kindest-hearted, the most irrational, the most intelligent, the most contradictory, the most consistent people whom Jove, taking counsel of Venus and the Graces, Mars and the Furies, ever created for the delight and terror of the world,—in a word, the Parisians."



A CAPTIVATING NOVELIST.

IN an honorable way, Mr. William Black has drawn public attention to himself. He has made rapid advances toward a foremost place among English novelists. Henceforward, however, he must move with caution. His latest work is not his best. Success seems to have rendered him over-desirous to bring out new books. He ought strongly to resist such an inclination, lest his upward course reach no higher point than that attained in "A Princess of Thule."

Respect for this writer's ability is excited by what his books incidentally promise of yet better things, as well as by what he has really achieved in them. Constant suggestions of reserved power, whose limits have not yet been indicated, largely augment the admiration awakened by the power actually exercised. Like most men, he can do some things better and more easily than others, and he likes to do his best so well that he occasionally gives the reader a little too much of a good thing. This remark is more especially true of his skill and inclination to describe wild or sublime natural scenery and homely landscapes. What has been said of Dickens is emphati-

cally true of this author: "He has the painter in him, and the English painter. Never, surely, did a mind figure to itself with more exact detail or greater energy all the parts and tints of a picture."

Read this delineation of a gathering storm at sea near the coast:

"The pinnacle was put about, and run toward a certain dark speck that was seen floating on the waves; while at the same moment over all the west there broke a great and sudden fire of yellow,—streaming down from the riven clouds upon the dusky gray of the sea. In this wild light the islands grew both dark and distant; and near at hand there was a glare on the water that dazzled the eyes and made all things look fantastic and strange. It lasted but for a moment. The clouds slowly closed, the west grew gray and cold, and over all the sea there fell the leaden-hued twilight again, while the bow of the boat—going this way and that in search of the dead bird—seemed to move forward into the waste of waters like the nose of a retriever."

Look at this picture of the storm coming down:

"He was still looking far over the mystic plain of the waves toward that lurid streak, when he seemed to hear a strange sound in the air. It was not a distant sound, but apparently a muttering as of voices all around and in front, hoarse, low, and ominous. And while he still stood watching, with a curiosity which dulled all sense of fear, the slow widening of the blackness across the sea, a puff of wind smote his cheek, and brought the message that those troubled voices of the waves were deepening into a roar.

Near the boat the sea was calm, and the darkening sky quite still; but it seemed as though a great circle were enclosing them, and that the advancing line of storm could be heard raging in the darkness without being itself visible. In the intense stillness that reigned around them, this great, hoarse, deepening tumult of sounds seemed to find a strange echo; and then, while the men were getting the boat put about and made ready for the squall, the water in the immediate neighborhood became powerfully agitated, a hissing of breaking waves was heard all around, and the first blow of the wind struck the boat as if with a hammer."

And then in what follows notice that the author is a poet as well as a painter. Observe how gleefully he rides in, diffuses himself through, becomes a part of the wild action of winds and waters:

"As the boat rose and sank with the waves, and reeled and staggered under the tearing wind, the Whaup, dashing back the salt water from his eyes and mouth, and holding on to the prow, peered into the wild gloom ahead, and was near shouting joyously aloud from the mere excitement and madness of the chase. It was a race with the waves; and the pinnace rolled and staggered down in a drunken fashion into huge black depths only to rise clear again on the hissing masses of foam; while wind and water alike—the black and riven sky, the plunging and foaming sea, and the great roaring gusts of the gale that came tearing up from the south—seemed sweeping onward for those dusky and jagged rocks which formed the nearest line of land."

Now note how the writer is not only a poet, but a dramatic poet; how he makes the incidents of this

storm into a scene in a drama, bringing human hearts into its play,—swaying, wringing, holding them on the rack,—suggesting vastly more than is visible to the spectator :

“The darkness fell fast, and yet as far as they could see there was no speck of a boat coming in from the wild and moving waste of gray. To the girl standing there and gazing out it seemed that the horizon of the other world—that mystic margin on which in calmer moments we seem to see the phantoms of those who have been taken from us passing in a mournful procession, speechless and cold-eyed, giving to us no sign of recognition—had come close and near, and might have withdrawn behind its shadowy folds all the traces of life which the sea held. Could it be that the black pall of death had fallen just beyond those gloomy islands, and hidden forever from mortal eyes that handful of anxious men who had lately been struggling toward the shore? Was the bright young life that she had grown familiar with, and almost learned to love, now snatched away without one mute pressure of the hand to say farewell?”

Later on is a scene more tragical, a climax at the end of the last act but one, and the great, resistless storm has a part in it, like relentless destiny in the ancient drama :

“Then the first shock of the storm fell,—fell with a crash on the fir woods, and tore through them with a voice of thunder. All over now the sky was black ; and there was a whirlwind whitening the sea, the cry of which could be heard far out beyond the land. Then came the rain in wild, fierce torrents that blew about the wet fields and

raised red channels of water in the roads. Coquette had no covering of any sort. In a few minutes she was drenched; and yet she did not seem to know. She only staggered on blindly, in the vain hope of reaching Saltcoats before the darkness had fallen, and seeking some shelter. She would not go to meet Lord Earlshope. She would creep into some hovel; and then, in the morning, send a message of repentance to her uncle, and go away somewhere, and never see any more the relations and friends whom she had betrayed and disgraced.

“The storm grew in intensity. The roar of the sea could now be heard far over the cry of the wind; and the rain clouds came down over the sea in huge masses and were blown down upon the land in hissing torrents. Still Coquette struggled on.”

This on the shore. Out there in the midst of the black tempest, the red lightnings, the frothing waves, Lord Earlshope is drowning. His last prayer must have been for Coquette. But in the raging tumult no human ear could hear it. He had written her a letter; in that letter he had asked forgiveness, had made such reparation as he could, and then gone away on his yacht alone to avoid doing her a great and irreparable wrong, sailing out into the mist and the darkness which were never clearly to be lifted from the termination of his short voyage and of his patient and sorrowful life.

The passages quoted above from “A Daughter of Heth” are fair enough samples of a large portion of that book. Grand, solemn, sublime things fire this author’s imagination. One after another he seizes

on and fixes in his pages their noblest aspects. He has the Northern fancy powerfully developed. He grasps the pen when Ossian would have seized the harp. Both could feel inspiration from the same sources. Mr. Black can, however, picture views which to the ordinary observer are far from sublime. To him nothing seen on the earth, in the air, or amid the waves, seems to be commonplace. In every vista he beholds new and strange beauties. All through that journey described in the book, called "The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton," he is busy painting English and Scotch landscapes,—the sky, the clouds, the sea when it is visible, the islands when they come in sight. As he paints he tells wittily, with quiet and charming humor, his simple story,—that is, he places the four or five personages, carefully and distinctly drawn and sufficiently contrasted in color, in each picture, so disposed that the lovers are gradually brought nearer and nearer together. Of course this journey is northward. His heart—generally the hearts of his heroines also—yearns toward the north country, longs for its airs, its scenery, its odors, the simple hospitality and friendship of its inhabitants. The sea only does he love still more. He must be an enthusiastic yachtsman; delighting especially to sail along the coast of the Highlands and among the Western Islands, and feeling great joy in being carried on the bosom of the deep.

With all his fondness for the grand and gloomy,

he is not too sombre, not over-serious, never weakly sentimental, never morbidly melancholy, often sportive, sometimes gleeful. The bright sunshine makes him want to laugh with delight; the rustle of the leaves incites him to sing for mere pleasure; he watches the slanting rain, and unconsciously notes the degree of its obliquity; he sees the heavy drops of a shower throwing lively little jets of water from the shining surface of a miniature lake, and he is inclined to dance. Only the pattering on the foliage and a great sense of overpowering beauty all around him in all these scenes keep him still. He will lose nothing of it, not a breath, not a glimpse, not a sound. He absorbs it all.

This passionate love for the beauties of nature, this worship of its glories, make in him the landscape painter, tempt him to give his readers somewhat too much of description, too many minutely-delineated prospects; tempt him also to use the same graphic expressions too often. The very strength and brilliancy of these expressions instantly fix attention on them, and their repetition is therefore the more noticeable. Bubbles are "bells of air;" the moon is a "yellow" or a "golden sickle;" from windows in the evening "red" or "yellow light" always shines; the trees cast shadows across a "yellow road;" the sea in sunlight is "yellow" or "golden;" a "glare of yellow fire" very often "leaps into the day;" a "yellow glare" or a "yellow glory" too frequently rests on sheets of water, or surrounds

hotels and houses ; a "white glare" not rarely lies on the highway ; the scent of seaweed is not unfrequently wafted through the air, and is always a "cold odor ;" the smell of burning peat and "resinous odors" perfume the pages. Sudden changes in the aspect of the heavens are "strange things" that happen. These faults of iteration are the result of a too strenuous effort to affect the reader with all the intensity of the writer's impressions, as well as to picture strongly their causes. They are the faults of a painter who uses glaring colors somewhat too lavishly ; faults, however, which it would be hypercritical to notice but for the exquisite style, harmony, and finish of his works considered in their integrity.

For "The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton," indeed, the author's plan evidently was so made as to give him opportunities to describe almost every kind of English rural scenes in summer, as they appear at morning, noon, and night, together with the sun, the moon, the seven stars, and the firmament generally, the clouds particularly, some portions of the sea, some Scottish mountains, vales, and glens, rivulets and lakes, cascades and pools, the wind and the weather. Therefore lengthened and minute delineations of all these things in their different phases cannot be censured as out of place, particularly as the writer took care not to make the story, which runs through the book, exciting enough to arouse the reader's impatience. Yet the reader must go through the scenes as the author did, in a sauntering way,

otherwise he becomes surfeited with views of landscapes.

But in "A Princess of Thule" such sketches are often interpolated at so great length that they sensibly retard the action. The book has hardly any other fault, and is, notwithstanding this, a work of rare merit. It is notably fresh, pure, and wholesome. The story is uncommonly interesting. The reader's attention and sympathies are absorbed by the play of the original, clearly sketched, and admirably contrasted characters. He does not like to have his regard drawn away by a loquacious neighbor who will insist on pointing out to him all the beauties of the scenery. He is more interested in the play than in the decorations of the stage. Yet the author's descriptions of Borva, Stornoway, The Lewis, the mountains, the coasts, the inlets, the straits, the bays, the sea, are so graphic and present so much magnificent beauty to the reader's imagination that in spite of the story's fascinations he reads them all and conceives an almost irresistible longing to visit the northern Hebrides, to sail in a yacht among the islands, to watch the ever-varying aspect of the waves, the sudden changes in sky and light, and to give himself up to the supreme joy of conscious existence and the certainty that he is, through every sense, taking into, and making a part of himself, as it were, some portions of all this beauty and glory. The book has "the freshness and pleasant odors of innumerable woods and fields," over which the sweet

sea-breezes are blowing. In it the painter recedes somewhat and the poet comes forward. The author has increased his scope and brought more phases of his power into action. The figures are skilfully grouped, strongly opposed. The outlines are flowing and distinct. The sculptor that lies within the painter had something to do with the work. Here, as in his other books, the author manifests the delight which he feels in observing and pointing out the symptoms of love slowly coming on. He has given this, his own peculiarity, to "Queen Titania:"

"It was a pretty comedy for a time, and my lady had derived an infinite pleasure and amusement from watching the small and scarcely perceptible degrees by which the young folks got drawn toward each other."

He knows no love except that which is wholesome and has a certain nobility; he seems not even to suspect that any other kind exists. There is no pulling and hauling among his lovers; to him love is a sacred thing, and he veils its mysteries. What can be purer, more delicate, more beautiful, for example, than the manner in which the reconciliation between Sheila and her husband is effected? She will go to Johnny's yacht, hoping to make better acquaintance with the party on board:

"'And we shall become very great friends with them, papa, and they will be glad to take us to Jura,' she said with a smile, for she knew there was not much of the hospitality of Borvabost bestowed with ulterior motives."

She has heard from the cautious yachtsman that Lavender, the young husband whom she had felt compelled so sadly to abandon, was at Jura. She does not know that he came from there with Johnny in his vessel. So they push off and go aboard. As they are about to descend into the cabin Mackenzie sees Mosenberg, and at once suspects the truth.

“Mackenzie was getting very uneasy. Every moment he expected Lavender would enter this confined little cabin; and was this the place for these two to meet, before a lot of acquaintances?”

“‘Sheila,’ he said, ‘it is too close for you here, and I am going to have a pipe with the gentlemen. Now if you wass a good lass you would go ashore again, and go up to the house, and say to Mairi that we will all come for luncheon at one o’clock, and she must get some fish up from Borvabost. Mr. Eyre, he will send a man ashore with you in his own boat, that is bigger than mine, and you will show him the creek to put into. Now go away, like a good lass, and we will be up ferry soon—oh, yes, we will be up directly at the house.’”

Sheila “wass a good lass” and she went ashore. But the affectionate old King of Borva was a little out of his reckoning. Lavender, unable to bear the suspense of waiting on the yacht, unable also to restrain his impatience to look once more at his wife, though from a distance, had gone ashore.

“Sheila walked slowly up the rude little path, taking little heed of the blustering wind and the hurrying clouds. Her eyes were bent down, her face was very pale. When

she got to the top of the hill she looked, in a blank sort of way, all around the bleak moorland, but probably she did not expect to see any one there. Then she walked, with rather an uncertain step, into the house. She looked into the room, the door of which stood open. Her husband sat there, with his arms outstretched on the table and his head buried in his hands. He did not hear her approach, her footfall was so light, and it was with the same silent step she went into the room and knelt down beside him and put her hands and face on his knee and said, simply, 'I beg for your forgiveness.'

"He started up and looked at her as though she were some spirit, and his own face was haggard and strange. 'Sheila,' he said, in a low voice, laying his hand gently on her head, 'it is I who ought to be there, and you know it. But I cannot meet your eyes. I am not going to ask for your forgiveness just yet. I have no right to expect it.'"

Such is the tone of the whole scene, which is too long to be quoted here.

Just at this time Sheila's big-hearted father appears in one of his roundest and fullest phases.

"Meanwhile the old King of Borva had been spending a somewhat anxious time down in the cabin of the *Phœbe*. Many and many a day had he been planning a method by which he might secure a meeting between Sheila and her husband, and now it had all come about without his aid and in a manner which rendered him unable to take any precautions. He did not know but that some awkward accident might destroy all the chances of the affair. He knew that Lavender was on the island. He had frankly asked young Mosenberg as soon as Sheila had left the yacht.

“‘Oh, yes,’ the lad said, ‘he went away into the island early this morning. I begged of him to go to your house; he did not answer. But I am sure he will. I know he will.’

“‘My Kott!’ Mackenzie said, ‘and he has been wandering about the island all the morning, and he will be very faint and hungry, and a man is neffer in a good temper then for making up a quarrel. If I had known the last night, I could hef had dinner with you all here, and we should hef given him a good glass of whiskey, and then it wass a good time to tek him up to the house.’

“‘Oh, you may depend on it, Mr. Mackenzie,’ Johnny Eyre said, ‘that Lavender needs no stimulus of that sort to make him desire a reconciliation. No, I should think not. He has done nothing but brood over this affair since ever he left London; and I should not be surprised if you scarcely knew him, he is so altered. You would fancy he had lived ten years in that time.’

“‘Ay, ay,’ Mackenzie said, not listening very attentively, and evidently thinking more of what might be happening elsewhere; ‘but I was thinking, gentlemen, it wass time for us to go ashore and go up to the house, and hef something to eat.’

“‘I thought you said one o’clock for luncheon, sir,’ young Mosenberg said.

“‘One o’clock!’ Mackenzie repeated impatiently; ‘who the tefle can wait till one o’clock if you hef been walking about an island since daylight with nothing to eat or drink?’

“Mr. Mackenzie forgot that it was not Lavender he had asked to lunch.

“‘Oh, yes,’ he said, ‘Sheila hass had plenty of time to

send down to Borvabost for some fish ; and by the time you get up to the house you will see that it is ready.'

" ' Very well,' Johnny said, ' we can go up to the house, any way.'

" He went up the companion, and he had scarcely got his head above the level of the bulwarks when he called back,—

" ' I say, Mr. Mackenzie, here is Lavender on shore and your daughter is with him. Do they want to come on board, do you think ? Or do they want us to go ashore ?'

" Mackenzie uttered a few phrases in Gaelic, and got up on deck instantly. There, sure enough, was Sheila with her hand on her husband's arm, and they were both looking toward the yacht. The wind was blowing too strong for them to call. Mackenzie wanted himself to pull in for them, but this was overruled, and Pate was despatched.

" An awkward pause ensued. The three standing on deck were sorely perplexed as to the forthcoming interview, and as to what they should do. Were they to rejoice over a reconciliation, or ignore the fact altogether, and simply treat Sheila as Mrs. Lavender ? Her father, indeed, fearing that Sheila would be strangely excited, and would probably burst into tears, wondered what he could get to scold about."

And so all the indirections of the dear old man's simple diplomacy had accomplished nothing. What he wanted so much to effect had been brought about by accident, so far as he could see. But he was not the less happy for that.

If we carefully regard the personages, they appear to live. Indeed, their apparent reality attracts our critical and admiring regard. They are the work of

the poet, the maker, who has created them all in some phase of his own image. We want to go to Borva and see the old King, grandly simple, notwithstanding his diplomatic purposes and ways, open, rugged, sturdy, firm almost as his own island. We feel a strange inclination to kneel to Sheila as to a kind of Madonna, who speaks English with the sweetest quaintness of style and pronunciation. We should certainly greet them and all their people with the warmth of cordial affection, according to their degree. We should want to meet there also Lavender, who commits so many sins of inconsideration, but is a good fellow after all; and Ingram, who knows the cost of unselfishness, but practises it all the same. We should be too happy and charitable to wish the eccentric old aunt, Mrs. Lavender, that terrible satire on a certain class, to be there. We should rather see her at her house in London. But Mrs. Lorraine and her mother might come, and of course the young musician Mosenberg and Johnny Eyre, and all the lesser people.

Almost without exception the author's style is pure and simple; his diction elegant and strong. If the feeling of a poet is in him, so is that of the musician also.

In Mosenberg, with his unconscious revelations of genius, the writer has evidently made himself a boy again.

“Do you think, madame, any fine songs like that, or any fine words that go to the heart of people, are written

about any one person? Oh, no! The man has a great desire in him to say something beautiful or sad, and he says it, not to one person, but to all the world; and all the world takes it from him as a gift. Sometimes, yes, he will think of one woman, or he will dedicate the music to her, or he will compose it for her wedding, but the feeling in his heart is greater than any that he has for her. Can you believe, madame, that Mendelssohn wrote the *Hochzeitm*—the Wedding March—for any one wedding? No. It was all the marriage joy of all the world he put into his music, and every one knows that. And you hear it at this wedding, at that wedding, but you know it belongs to something far away, and more beautiful than the marriage of any one bride with her sweetheart. And if you will pardon me, madame, for speaking about myself, it is about some one I never knew, who is far more beautiful and precious to me than any one I ever knew, that I try to think when I sing these sad songs, and then I think of her far away, and not likely ever to see me again.'

" 'But some day you will find that you have met her in real life,' Sheila said, 'and you will find her far more beautiful and kind to you than anything you dreamed about; and you will try to write your best music to give to her. And then, if you should be unhappy, you will find how much worse is the real unhappiness about one you love than the sentiment of a song you can lay aside at any moment.' "



A CHARMING STORY-TELLER.

IN the winter of 1852-3 Mr. William Makepeace Thackeray first visited Washington. While there he was entertained one Sunday evening by an eminent political editor, afterward a foreign minister, whose house was the favorite Sunday evening resort of statesmen and politicians, and whose wife was noted for brilliant intellectual qualities. A few ladies, intimate friends of the hostess, generally assisted her at these informal receptions. On this particular evening, Mr. Thackeray had plainly been wearied by many formal presentations and much formal talk, and at length retired to a corner of the room where he could observe the company and all that passed. The hostess sat near him, a member of Congress from Massachusetts, more celebrated for his wit and conversational powers than for any other quality, was opposite, and with a collegian, who was the fourth of the little party, helped somewhat to isolate the distinguished visitor. While engaged in a contest of pleasantry and repartee with the Congressional wit, Thackeray was particularly struck by the beauty, grace, and cleverness of a young lady just out of a convent, where she had been educated,

then enjoying her first winter in society, who, seated near the middle of the parlor, was surrounded by a group of men, all more or less distinguished, whom she entertained with a degree of artless ease and vivacity truly charming. The great satirist could hardly keep his eyes off her. Several times, by some movement or remark, he had called the attention of those near him to the youthful belle, and at length, with visible warmth and tenderness, he exclaimed, "She reminds me of my girl; and *she* is the *best* fellow!"

Any appreciative reader of Miss Thackeray's works cannot fail to understand and in a manner respond to her father's admiration and tender affection for his daughter. Plainly they were enough alike for the closest sympathy, sufficiently unlike for mutual admiration. Profound and prolonged reflection is characteristic of both. By it the manly and aggressive father is led to a clear perception of the shams and hypocrisies of social life, and wrought thereby to a degree of indignation that must find vent, but which with masterly self-control he expresses in scathing irony; while in the gentle and womanly daughter the same reflection enlarges and quickens her tender sympathies with what is true and honest, and brings her to the discovery of many hidden amiable qualities and evanescent graces. They are in some measure counterparts of each other. Both feel the same love for what is virtuous and noble; but in one this love excites the most

unrelenting animosity against vice and meanness, and impels him to attack them under all disguises and in all positions with crushing sarcasms; by it the other is led to nourish and cheer, to caress and magnify these objects of her affectionate veneration. Both are moved by the same tenderness and pity, not infrequently, however, in opposite directions—the father to assail and implacably pursue the active cause of wrong and endurance, the daughter to shelter the wronged and suffering by spreading about them wings of charity like a protecting angel. The father loves truth and sincerity, and therefore hates falsehood and sham; but the hatred is often the more active of the two passions, from its very nature and from the nature of the man. The daughter loves truth and goodness and beauty so fervently that she is content as much as possible to forget that there are such things as vice and roguery in the world. She does not belong to the aggressive sex; it is not in her nature to assail; with the instincts of a woman she delights to foster, to develop, to refine, to beautify.

The most pervading impression left by a reading of Miss Thackeray's works is of an atmosphere singularly pure, sunny, and tranquil. You feel well assured that she is a painter; you know that she can make pictures. In the world which she presents to you are sunlit fields, and shady vales, and verdant knolls, and glimpses of streamlets, and the shimmer of lakes, and the sea toward which the landscape

slopes. The scene is full of harmonies; you see that the air is resonant; you almost hear the sub-bass of the surge; a feeling akin to religion fills, enlarges, ennobles you; and you are quite certain that but for the written revelation you must, if you lived then, do as her heroine does unconsciously, involuntarily be a pagan and worship the elements.

“What is this strange voice of nature that says with one utterance so many unlike things? Is it that we only hear the voice of our own hearts in the sound of the waves, in the sad cries of birds as they fly, of animals, the shivering of trees, the creaking and starting of the daily familiar things all about their homes? This echo of the sea, which to some was a complaint and a reproach, was to Reine Chrétien like the voice of a friend and teacher—of a religion, almost. To her, when she looked at the gleaming immensity, it was almost actually and in truth to her the great sea, upon the shores of which we say we are as children playing with the pebbles. It was her formula. Her prayers went out unconsciously toward the horizon, as some pray looking toward heaven, in the words which their fathers have used.”

This author has the power of delicately graduated and harmonious contrasts. In the lives that she describes, as in the landscapes which she portrays, clouds more or less dark temporarily obscure the sun, and make the differences of light and shade. Inclement weather, a gloomy drizzle, or a cheerless fog give added brilliancy, intensity, and consolation to the light, the warmth, and the comforts of home.

She knows what sadness and sorrow are, and she knows how to make the joy that is often hidden within them gradually shine forth. Her work has flowing but clearly-defined outlines. The parts and the colors glide imperceptibly into each other. No incongruous juxtapositions shock us, no violent transitions occur. It is like a finely-woven web, in which all the threads are even, all the tints perfect, and every fibre in its place. The moral groundwork of the texture, however, is sometimes unduly enlarged; the scenes are thereby separated by distances too wide; the action is not clearly enough intertwined, and may be temporarily lost to view by the reader who conscientiously omits nothing. In these wide patches of morality, where, indeed, a very humane philosophy is cultivated, but in which the interest is of a kind entirely different from that enlisted by the story, lies Miss Thackeray's chief and almost only defect of noticeable importance as a novelist, save one, which will be considered farther on. The tone of these parts of her works is, to be sure, in perfect harmony with that of the particular story which illustrates them; but they suggest illustration and application, which is itself an offence against art, though meritorious in a sermon, and more or less deform the symmetry of creations which, but for them, would be just and comely. She cannot free herself entirely from the principles of the English modern school of novelists; one of the chief aims of which is to be practical and useful.

The utility of art seems to be the subject of an English artist's reflection; to apply it directly to some demonstrably beneficial end the object of his labors. Above all he would do something to strengthen the British constitution, to make the British social fabric more solid, to increase the comforts of the British people, to add something to the glory of the British name. Miss Thackeray has, in some measure, emancipated herself from the thralldom of this national utilitarian feeling. In sentiment she is cosmopolitan while cherishing a tender affection for her British home. But the influence of English literature and of its modern school is manifest in her works. Apparently possessing all the qualities necessary to a complete novelist, she yet permits them to be displaced and to some extent neutralized by the reflections of an amiable moralist. Her benevolence compels her to instruct, her sweet clarity to tell you more or less directly how, by the use of a wider consideration, you may be more just, how you may do greater good and less evil by exercising more thought for those who are near you, by being less selfish, less absorbed in yourself and your own interests, by entering more fully into the lives of others through sympathy; how, in short, you may make others better and happier by being yourself greater and better. This partakes of the nature of an argument. It addresses itself not to imagination and taste, but to reason and conviction. The propositions are insinuated one after another, so that

you are not alarmed by the preliminaries of an essay or the sudden definitions of premises for a logical demonstration. But the premises are there, the proofs are supplied by the personages, the argument strengthened by appeals more or less straightforward, and the conclusion is enforced by the catastrophe. To sustain the proofs and the argument analysis follows analysis, descriptions of character are prolonged and multiplied. An occasional excess of analysis and description is the other noticeable defect in Miss Thackeray's work to which allusion was made above. This excess is greater in her earlier than in her later works. In "Old Kensington" it reaches the extreme. That alone of her stories seems to have been written to order—an order requiring so many pages for so much money. But, aside from any other temptation to exaggeration in this respect, she is led into it by her love for the picturesque and her minute observation of it. No detail escapes her :

"Five o'clock on a fine Sunday,—western light streaming along the shore, low cliffs stretching away on either side, with tufted grasses and thin, straggling flowers growing from the loose, arid soil,—far-away promontories, flashing amid distant shores, which the tides have not yet overlapped, all shining in the sun. The waves swell steadily inward, the foam sparkles when the ripples meet the sands.

"The horizon is solemn dark blue, but a great streak of light crosses the sea, the white sails gleam, so do the white

caps of the peasant women, and the wings of the seagulls as they go swimming through the air.

"Holiday people are out in their Sunday clothes. They go strolling along the shore, or bathing and screaming to each other in the waters. The countrymen wear their blue smocks of a darker blue than the sea, and they walk by their wives and sweethearts in their gay-colored Sunday petticoats. A priest goes by; a grand lady in frills, yellow shoes, red jacket, flyaway hat, and a cane. Her husband is also in scarlet and yellow. Then some more women and Normandy caps flapping, gossiping together, and baskets and babies, and huge umbrellas. A figure, harlequin-like, all stripes and long legs, suddenly darts from behind a rock and frisks into the water, followed by a dog barking furiously. More priests go by from the seminary at Asnelles. Then perhaps a Sister of Charity, with her large flat shoes, accompanied by two grand-looking bonnets.

"The little Englishman was sauntering in his odd, loose clothes; Monsieur Fontaine, the maire, tripping beside him with short, quick, military steps, neat gaiters, a cane, thread gloves, and a curly-rimmed Panama hat. M. Fontaine was the taller of the two, but the Englishman seemed to keep ahead somehow, although he only sauntered, and dragged one leg lazily after the other. Pélottier, the innkeeper, had been parading up and down all the afternoon with his rich and hideous bride. She went mincing along, with a parasol, and mittens, and gold earrings, and a great gold ring on her forefinger, and a Paris cap, stuck over with pins and orange-flowers. She looked daggers at Reine Chrétien, who had scorned Pélottier, and boxed his great red ears, it was said, earrings and all. As for Reine, she marched past the couple in her Normandy peasant dress,

with its beautiful old laces and gold ornaments, looking straight before her, as she took the arm of her grandfather, the old farmer from Tracy.

"Besides all these grown-up people there comes occasionally a little flying squadron of boys and girls, rushing along, tumbling down, shouting and screaming at the pitch of their voices, to the scandal of the other children who are better brought up, and who are soberly trotting in their small bourcelots, and bibs and blouses, by the side of their fathers and mothers. The babies are the solemnest and the funniest of all, as they stare at the sea and the company from their tight maillots or cocoons.

"The country folks meet, greet one another cheerfully, and part with signs and jokes; the bathers go on shouting and beating the water; the lights dance. In the distance, across the sands, you see the figures walking leisurely homeward before the tide overtakes them; the sky gleams whiter and whiter at the horizon, and bluer and more blue behind the arid grasses that fringe the overhanging edge of the cliffs.

"Four or five little boys come running up, one by one, handkerchief-flying umbrella-bearer ahead, to the martial sound of a penny trumpet. The little captain pursues them, breathless and exhausted, brandishing his sword in an agony of command. 'Soldats,' he says, addressing his refractory troops; 'soldats, souvenez-vous qu'il ne faut jamais courrir. Soldats, ne courez pas, je vous en prrrrie, —une, deux, trois,' and away they march to the relief of a sand fort which is being attacked by the sea.

"And so the day goes on, and the children play, and while they build 'their castles of dissolving sand to watch them overflow,' the air, and the sounds, and the colors in

which all these people are moving, seem to grow clearer and clearer; you can see the country people clambering the cliffs behind the village, and hear the voices and the laughter of the groups assembled on the embanked market-place. And meanwhile M. le Maire and the Englishman are walking slowly along the sands toward Tracy, with long, grotesque shadows lengthening as the sun begins to set."

This is very graphic; it is also very thorough. Possibly the thoroughness of the description impresses you even more than its vivacity. You are struck by the conscientious exactitude with which every particular of the scene is noted and clearly set forth. While considering it you forget that this is but a space, and a small space, in the background of a picture which you came to see. Somehow it reminds you of what has been said about the English and their paintings to the disparagement of both: "They pride themselves on their painting; at least they study it with surprising minuteness, in the Chinese fashion; they can paint a bottle of hay so exactly that a botanist will tell the species of every stalk; one artist lived three months under canvas on a heath, so that he might thoroughly know heath."

To many readers such description, if kept within bounds, is very pleasing; but too much of it becomes monotonous and wearisome. Beyond the measure necessary for repose and contrast, it delays the action of the story, distracts and diminishes the reader's attention, may excite his impatience, and, possibly, his disgust. In the background of a picture made

especially to represent living beings and evident action, we look for a general effect, not for exact copying of nature, the precise portrayal of every weed and blade of grass, and flower, and tree, and stone, and sand-bank, as if each had been carefully counted and measured and placed in position according to a mathematical survey, and the very shade of its color mixed on the palette by actual comparison. And yet the painted has a great advantage over the printed picture. All its parts may be viewed at least casually with one glance, while in the written description the field of vision is traversed by one minute portion after another, like a miniature panorama. To grasp all and see it as the writer wished, you must strain attention and memory alike, and while this strain continues you must call in fancy to light and color and vivify the whole. The more prolonged and the more minute the description the greater and more complicated the task imposed upon the reader. In most cases the effect on his mind is that of a jumble of not very intelligible sentences. The best of all pictures which a writer can present are those suggested in a word or described in a phrase.

In some of Miss Thackeray's books, as, for instance, in the one already mentioned, these errors are fundamental; they distort the whole plan. Others are simple and pure works of art, in which the reader hardly knows what most to admire,—the absolutely clean and wholesome tone, the delicacy,

variety, and harmony of tints, the symmetrical proportions, or the gentle, loving, beneficent nature everywhere manifest in the creation. For examples look at the five short tales grouped under the one title, "Five Old Friends," especially "Cinderella," and the longer story, "From an Island." All that she does, whether fairly included within the limits of a symmetrical form or not, bears marks of a firm, strong, but very delicate artistic hand. The sensibility, nice perception, and refinement everywhere present might easily cause her strength to be undervalued. Her powers act as gently and harmoniously as do the forces of nature, without their tempests and convulsions. She has the germs of many characters; has that kind of genius which seeks various manifestations. But within all the scope of her understanding there is no place where positive vice may be conceived or where an ideal villain can be harbored. You would infer from reading her books that she was unconscious of the fact that vice and villainy can exist as active forces in society. She makes no use of them to produce contrasts, to effect a catastrophe, or in any way. The foibles and ordinary characteristics in reputable men and women furnish her all needful divergencies and motives. In "Out of the World" observe the contrast between Dr. Rich and his wife, and how easily and naturally the catastrophe is brought about through her selfishness. Miss Thackeray deals with manhood and womanhood, not with titles and wealth and vulgar-

ity. For a hero she infinitely prefers a painter to a prince, and a sweet, modest, refined, misplaced governess is vastly more interesting in her eyes than is a flaunting great lady. In her esteem talent worthily used is a patent of nobility, and genius in paths of rectitude a king. These constitute the aristocracy of her world; in their society she feels herself honored and content. She has no railing word, no sarcasm, for those who may differ from her. You cannot well conceive her at enmity with any one, or hating anything, in the ordinary sense of the word; much less can you imagine her descending from the pure, calm, and sunny atmosphere in which she moves to engage in a hand-to-hand contest with the folly, the vanity, and the wickedness that make the activity on a lower plane of life; but you may readily picture her to your imagination mourning over unhappiness and wrong-doing wherever found.

These characteristics manifest her disposition, not her want of vision. She would rather lift up than throw down a fellow-creature; would rather draw than drive him aright; believes gentleness and love to be the most powerful agents for correction. She has Hans Christian Andersen's sympathy for souls out of place, imprisoned, borne down; would lead them out of their confinement into the pure ether, where they may freely breathe and fully expand:

“Catherine was oppressed by circumstance, and somewhat morbid by nature, as people are without the power of expan-

sion. She had lived with dull people all her life, and had never learnt to talk or to think. Her stepmother was a tender-hearted and sweet-natured sad woman, who was accustomed to only see the outside of things. Mrs. George had two dozen little sentences in her repertory, which she must have said over many thousand times in the course of her life, and which Catherine had been accustomed hitherto to repeat after her, and to think of as enough for all the exigencies and philosophy of life. But now everything was changing, and she was beginning to idea thoughts for herself, and to want words to put them into; and with the thoughts and the words, alas! came the longing for some one to listen to her strange, new discoveries, and to tell her what they meant."

Cecilia, in the "Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," Ella, in "Cinderella," and to some extent Elizabeth, in the "Story of Elizabeth," suffer and are enlarged from similar imprisonment, to say nothing of others. Miss Thackeray's knowledge of human nature is wide and subtle. She discriminates shades of character with the nicest perception; uses as effective counterpoises differences that would escape a less delicate sense, or disappear under a less delicate handling. She has brought forward many personages; almost without exception they are completely individualized, consistent in their inconsistencies, thoroughly human; you would say they were drawn from life. Among them all you will fail to find two alike. Some of them remain with you and become your friends, such, for instance, as St. Julian in the

charming story "From an Island," and others. She fondly loves and intuitively understands children; dogs and all dumb and helpless things have a claim on her affection and consideration. She is like the girls whom she so well describes:

"Some girls have the motherly element strongly developed in them from their veriest babyhood, when they nurse their dolls to sleep upon their soft little arms, and carefully put away the little broken toy because it must be in pain."

Note how with a stroke of her vivifying brush she brings out a child's features. Can you not see Dulcie as she counts the hour?

"Anne heard the clock strike from her darkened bedroom, where she was lying upon the sofa resting. Dulcie, playing in her nursery, counted the strokes. 'Tebben, two, one; nonner one,' that was how she counted."

Or, as she sympathizes with and tries to soothe her father:

"Little Dulcie saw her father looking vexed; she climbed up his leg and got on his knee, and put her round, soft cheek against his. 'Sall I luboo?' said she."

Are you not a child again from pure sympathy when you read little Dolly's monologue as she lies abed in a dark room?

"'When I am dying—I dare say I shall die about seventeen—I shall send for John Morgan, and George will come from Eton, and Aunt Sarah will be crying, and, perhaps,

mamma and Capt. Palmer will be there, and I shall hold all their hands in mine, and say, "Now be friends for my sake." And then I shall urge George to exert himself more and go to church on week days; and then to Aunt Sarah I shall turn with a sad smile, and say, "Adieu, dear aunt, you never understood me—you fancied me a child when I had the feelings of a woman, and you sneered at me, and sent me to bed at eight o'clock. Do not crush George and Rhoda as you have crushed me; be gentle with them;" and then I shall cross my hands over my chest, and—and, what then?"

Are these not master-touches? Here is a picture made with a few lines in which, with other things, the very feelings of the young people are visible:

"To this day Dolly remembered the light of a certain afternoon in May, when all was hot and silent and sleepy in the old school-room at Church House. The boards cracked, the dust-motes floated; down below, the garden burned with that first summer glow of heat that makes a new world out of such old, well-worn materials as twigs, clouds, birds, and the human beings all round us. The little girls had been at work, and practised, and multiplied, and divided again; they had recollected various facts connected with the reign of Richard II. Mademoiselle had suppressed many a yawn; Dolly was droning over her sum—six and five made thirteen—over and over again. 'That I should have been, that thou shouldst have been, that he should have been,' drawled poor little Rhoda. Then a great fly hums by as the door opens, and Lady

Sarah appears with a zigzag of sunlight shooting in from the passage,—a ray of hope.”

This author’s gossamer-like fancy adorns every page, and a dewy freshness is over all. In her works are exquisite qualities so subtle that they escape dissection; they cannot be seized and particularly defined. They are perceived only by their sensible, pervading, and charming effect. They permeate the atmosphere which seems to emanate from and surround her stories, and cast a spell upon the refined reader. Of a like cause and effect she is herself conscious, and in “Miss Angel” has used them designedly with consummate skill. So long as Count Horn is acting a part, he bears about him an air, a kind of magnetic influence, like a great player when he comes on the scene and is said to fill the stage. This atmosphere which surrounds Horn is ominous; it threatens convulsion and disaster. When at length his trappings are torn off, and he appears in his own character, all this glamour instantly comes to an end.

“Miss Angel” is this writer’s latest book. Its heroine is Angelica Kauffmann, the painter, who, one hundred years ago, was celebrated, flattered, and caressed by the great world of London for her talents, beauty, and accomplishments. The work is a biography and reads like a romance; it is a romance and reads like a biography. Its personages are all historical; its scenes pass in real life. The outlines of fact, selected with reference to fine symmetry, are filled in from the writer’s imagination, and colored

so that form and tints show most pleasing harmony and proportion. So exquisitely is fiction woven with fact that you cannot distinguish the threads by an inspection of the texture alone. You are certain that the author is guiltless of affectation when she says,—

“I have been trying to tell a little story, of which the characters and incidents have come to me through a winter’s gloom so vividly that as I write now I can scarcely tell what is real and what is but my own imagination in it all.”

The very limitations of fact and the nature of the task repressed the action of any tendency which she might have felt to mar the shapeliness of her work by prolonged and repeated analyses, philosophical reflections, and moral deductions. She had a story to tell, and she has told it with such graces and embellishments as truth and good taste allow; and thus she has produced one of her most perfect achievements. Here, as elsewhere, her style is unaffected, polished, vigorous, nearly faultless, quite charming. Only occasionally does she manifest an inclination to fall into certain not very offensive mannerisms; very rarely, indeed, does she use a word inelegantly or inaccurately. Her works do praise her; they bear witness to a sweet, rich, delicate, large, loving, thoroughly healthy, uncommonly pure, and very fruitful nature. She is well known in America as well as in Europe; but, unlike many writers of the present day, Miss Thackeray’s merits are greater than her reputation.

AN INGENIOUS MORALIST.

“THESE fellow-mortals, every one, must be accepted as they are: you can neither straighten their noses, nor brighten their wit, nor rectify their dispositions; and it is these people—among whom your life is passed—that it is useful you should tolerate, pity, and love; it is these, more or less ugly, stupid, inconsistent people, whose movements of goodness you should be able to admire, for whom you should cherish all possible hopes, all possible patience. And I would not, even if I had the choice, be the clever novelist who could create a world so much better than this, in which we get up in the morning to do our daily work, that you would be likely to turn a harder, colder eye on the dusty streets and the common green fields—on the real breathing men and women, who can be chilled by your indifference or injured by your prejudice; who can be cheered and helped onward by your fellow-feeling, your forbearance, your outspoken, brave justice.

“So I am content to tell my simple story, without trying to make things seem better than they were,—dreading nothing, indeed, but falsity, which, in spite of one’s best efforts, there is reason to dread. Falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult. The pencil is conscious of a delightful facility in drawing a griffin,—the longer the claws and the larger the wings the better; but that marvellous facility, which we mistook for genius, is apt to forsake us when we want to

draw a real, unexaggerated lion. Examine your words well, and you will find that even when you have no motive to be false, it is a very hard thing to say the exact truth, even about your own immediate feelings,—much harder than to say something fine about them which is *not* the exact truth.

“It is for this rare, precious quality of truthfulness that I delight in many Dutch paintings, which lofty-minded people despise. I find a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of a monotonous, homely existence, which has been the fate of so many more among my fellow-mortals than a life of pomp or of absolute indigence, of tragic suffering or of world-stirring actions. I turn without shrinking from cloud-borne angels, from prophets, sibyls, and heroic warriors, to an old woman bending over her flower-pot, or eating her solitary dinner, while the noonday light, softened, perhaps, by a screen of leaves, falls on her mob-cap, and just touches the rim of her spinning-wheel, and her stone jug, and all those cheap, common things which are the precious necessities of life to her; or I turn to that village wedding, kept between four brown walls, where an awkward bridegroom opens the dance with a high-shouldered, broad-faced bride, while elderly and middle-aged friends look on, with very irregular noses and lips, and probably with quart pots in their hands, but with an expression of unmistakable contentment and good-will.

“In this world there are so many of these common, coarse people who have no picturesque sentimental wretchedness! It is so needful we should remember their existence, else we may happen to leave them quite out of our religion and philosophy, and frame lofty theories which only fit a world of extremes. There are few prophets in the world, few sublimely beautiful women, few heroes. I can't afford to

give all my love and reverence to such rarities ; I want a great deal of those feelings for my every-day fellow-men, especially for the few in the foreground of the great multitude whose faces I know, whose hands I touch, for whom I have to make way with kindly courtesy. It is more needful that I should have a fibre of sympathy connecting me with that vulgar citizen who weighs out my sugar in a vilely-assorted cravat and waistcoat than with the handsomest rascal in red scarf and green feathers ; more needful that my heart should swell with loving admiration at some trait of gentle goodness in the faulty people who sit at the same hearth with me, or in the clergyman of my own parish, who is perhaps rather too corpulent, and in other respects is not an Oberlin or a Tillotson, than at the deeds of heroes whom I shall never know except by hearsay, or at the sublimest abstract of all clerical graces that was ever conceived by an able novelist."

Thus George Eliot defines the sphere and purpose of her novels. You see she is eminently practical, a teacher of charity and fellow-feeling ; makes us sympathize with the fictitious in order that we may sympathize with the real ; unveils the larger and better aspect of common humanity, that we may see it nearer and more clearly, and know that all the men and women about us are of like desires, hopes, passions, sufferings, temptations, and virtues as ourselves. For such humanity she would have us "make way with kindly courtesy," not with affected superiority or supercilious contempt jostle it roughly, override it, or with selfish indifference pass it by on the other side. Her one text is, "Love thy neighbor

as thyself;" the purpose of her expositions to prove that our neighbors belong to no one class, but are found in all stations; that as human beings, nothing human should be to us foreign, common, or unclean. She does not propose to herself simply to compose a work of art, a thing of beauty, for the sake of its loveliness and the joy which it shall cause forever. Usefulness is her first object. She will make men better, more gentle, more kindly, more considerate. Art may be employed as an aid in effecting this object, as fine music may be used in the churches. But it must be subservient to the grand moral purpose. If complete art cannot consist with the ethical design, so much the worse for the art; it must suffer, have its position reversed, be dismembered if necessary. The sublimely beautiful pagan temple is utilized so far and in such way as it may be to build the hall for moral lectures. A frieze, an arch, a portico, a capital may remain entire, but they are dissevered the one from the other; plain English granite, British oak, or stucco intervenes, their harmonious relations and proportions are destroyed, the work of art has disappeared, but its substance has become useful.

Having placed before herself this proposition, namely, that common men and women are endowed with all the attributes of humanity, particularly those which are most worthy of respect and admiration,—tenderness, amiability, integrity, patience, fortitude, manliness, resignation, perseverance in well-doing, a

guiding conscience, veneration, true religion; and that they should be treated with kind consideration and courtesy, should have all the sympathy and esteem which these qualities merit, she is impelled by the incitements of a strong logical instinct to demonstrate it. Hence the plan of her work becomes that of a demonstrative argument, rather than the argument, or plot, of a work of art. A keen, brilliant, philosophic Frenchman has declared that such a plan and such a purpose are characteristic of English writers. "Hardly ever," says Henri Taine, "does a book paint a man in a disinterested manner; critics, philosophers, historians, novelists, poets even, give a lesson, maintain a theory, unmask or furnish a vice, represent a temptation overcome, relate the history of a character becoming formed. Their exact and minute description of sentiments ends always in approbation or blame; they are not artists, but moralists."

Even the master-poet, Milton, avows such a design almost at the very beginning of his great poem:

"What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

It must be conceded that, in going her chosen way, George Eliot follows in the footsteps of most illustrious predecessors. To carry out her demonstration satisfactorily she is constrained to enter very much

into details, not of actions, but of thoughts and feelings. The personage in her hands becomes a kind of moral manikin, which, with every change of posture, is dissected, and the cause and manner of the change minutely explained, in order that the auditory may be instructed, but, above all, convinced that such changes and movements are reasonable and natural, philosophically, and that they lead, more or less directly, to good or evil. These dissections are apt to occur too often, to last too long, to seem like repetitions. We would rather see the manikin move, guess at the cause, take it for granted that the motions are like those of nature, and draw our own moral from the catastrophe, whether it be the ascent of the figure on a bright canvas cloud or its descent into brighter, resinous flames. When we go to see the puppets play we are interested by the marvel, not the mechanism. When we visit the sculptor's exhibition room our sense of beauty is gratified and excited by art; when we are in his work-shop our curiosity may be appeased by knowledge. The purposes which lead us to the different apartments are as diverse as are the kinds of satisfaction which we may receive. Wishing to enjoy art, we should find only offence by entering a laboratory. Should we desire only fine music we would rather listen to it without being compelled to hear a sermon as well. But for the sake of the melody we do incline an ear to the preaching also, as the preacher believed and intended that we should; and in one sense his art is

thereby made evident. So, for the sake of what is very beautiful in George Eliot's novels, we read many philosophic and moral disquisitions of greater or less length, many long and minute expositions of commonplace characters, which in real life could hardly fail to be tedious, all the time somewhat impatient for the action, which has been brought to a standstill by this interjected matter, to resume its course. Most of this matter, by itself considered, is of surpassing merit, shows the author to be a person of very uncommon fulness, breadth, and depth, mistress of a very wide range of thought, intimate to a surprising degree with the phases and labyrinths of human nature. She says good things enough to fill volumes, as has been proved. If one of these volumes be examined by a person ignorant of the author's fame, he would suppose its contents to have been chiefly extracted from brilliant essays overcharged with the results of large observation and profound thought, with the proofs also of extraordinary intuition. But these essays and these good things which are uttered in her own person are mostly out of place in a novel, if the novel be regarded and criticised as a work of art. Their introduction is inartistic; they form excrescences more or less composed of foreign matter; they render the reader, who is anxious to follow the story without hindrance, restless and inattentive, so that he is in no mood to value them at their proper estimate and profit by them; they destroy the momentum of the

action when it should be moving on with accelerating speed and narrowing sweep to a climax. And yet they would almost surely delight such readers if encountered in a book of essays, taken up as such. In so doing her work, however, the author is but following the general plan which serves as a model for some of the most popular living English novelists besides herself; according to which plan, taken as a standard, the perfect novel would be represented by an admixture of about equal parts of "The Spectator," "The Rambler," and "Tom Jones" expurgated. At the same time, she is achieving her prescribed purpose, enforcing her arguments, and pleasing her countrymen, if it can, indeed, be truly said to her of them, "Their mood requires strong emotions; their mind asks for precise demonstrations. To satisfy their mood you must not touch the surface, but torture vice: to satisfy their mind you must not rail in sallies, but by arguments."

It is not improbable that George Eliot would be a greater artist were she a smaller woman. Her faculties are so many, so equally and so fully developed, that she remains in a state of tranquil equipoise unfavorable to that enthusiasm which, under the name of inspiration, takes possession of the true artist, transports and transfigures him as he stands in the presence of that divine beauty which is the object of his adoration, forgetful of everything other than the work of rendering visible to all eyes the glorious loveliness and ineffable might before which he

trembles in ecstasy. Her imagination is held in strict subjection to her judgment; it is the handmaid, not the mistress, of logic. This, in her esteem, is according to the proper subordination of the faculties, and the experience is what she herself calls "that delightful labor of the imagination which is not mere arbitrariness, but the exercise of disciplined power—combining and constructing with the clearest eye for probabilities and the fullest obedience to knowledge; and then, in yet more energetic alliance with impartial nature, standing aloof to invent tests by which to try its own work."

She keeps fancy in leading strings; does not give it the rein even when making an ascent; guides it mostly into level ground; works it in harness after the manner of a scientific explorer; and uses analysis as the test of whatever fancy may find. She is not content to give the results of such tests in their crystalline form. She wants the spectators to see for themselves the demonstration. And so the apparatus is displayed, and the analysis made publicly. It might be said that, in common with all novel-writers of the same school, she shows a certain shrewd policy in such manner of proceeding, if the chief object be to secure commendation for what the persons of the story do. The reader becomes so impatient for the examination to end, and for the personage to do something, that he is likely to approve that something when done, whatever it be; and thus he is, in a way, constrained into approbation of the characters.

This is the method of the mechanical inventor and the logician, not that of the poet, whose imagination and intuition grasp all the parts of the creation at once, see it through and through, without analysis, but as with the all-seeing eye of a creator. Not after the manner of this school of novelists did Homer, Virgil, Apuleius, Dante, Boccaccio, Cervantes, and other writers of immortal stories do their work. Not thus did Shakspeare demonstrate fidelity to nature and probability in his creations.

The author makes one of her own heroes regard these matters from her own point of view :

“ Many men have been praised as vividly imaginative on the strength of their profuseness or indifferent drawing or cheap narration—reports of very poor talk going on in distant orbs; or portraits of Lucifer coming down on his bad errands as a large, ugly man with bat’s wings and spurts of phosphorescence; or exaggerations of wantonness that seem to reflect life in a diseased dream. But these kinds of inspiration Lydgate regarded as rather vulgar and vinous compared with the imagination that reveals subtle actions inaccessible to any sort of lens, but tracked in that outer darkness though long pathways of necessary sequence by the inward light which is the last refinement of energy, capable of bathing even the ethereal atoms in its ideally illuminated space. He for his part had tossed away all cheap inventions where ignorance finds itself able and at ease: he was enamored of that arduous invention which is the very eye of research, provisionally framing its object, and correcting it to more and more exactness of relation; he wanted to pierce the obscurity of those minute processes which pre-



face human misery and joy, those invisible thoroughfares which are the first lurking-places of anguish, mania, crime, and that delicate poise and transition which determine the growth of happy or unhappy consciousness."

Any careful student of George Eliot's writings must recognize in the above quotation a very clear description of the way in which she uses imagination in making a book. The natural result of this method is a certain formality of style, a kind of rigid exactness, an appearance of constraint, a want of effusive spontaneity. Her structures are not like the products of rich nature, flowing and exuberant; they are like mason-work. Each word and each sentence is measured, squared, fitted. All is very solid and strong, admirably done, after its kind. But the building is not a temple of the muses; it is a storehouse, made for utility, which must not be lessened by any concession to harmony of proportion or to lines of beauty. The materials are carefully selected, good, durable, well polished, but the marks of the chisel and of the sand-paper remain. We feel that the edifice is the work of a laborious as well as a skilful mechanic, not the magical creation of untrammelled genius. That genius had some part in it we are very sure; but we feel equally sure that this genius had been reduced to servitude, enslaved by practical, somewhat matter-of-fact wisdom, looking to turn the captive sprite's achievements to the best account.

Even nature seems to be loved by this author for

its usefulness rather than for its beauty; or, it might be said, for the beauty of its usefulness. She sympathizes with its catholicity, its munificence, its unostentatious benevolence. Fruit-trees with fruit, or blossoms promising beneficence, berry-bushes overladen with a luscious crop, hedge-rows, foliage in the shade of which cattle ruminant, excite in her the same kind and degree of enthusiastic admiration as do stores of clean, sweet-smelling household linen, or the dairy which "was certainly worth looking at. It was a scene to sicken for, with a sort of calenture in hot and dusty streets—such coolness, such purity, such fresh fragrance of new-pressed cheese, of firm butter, of wooden vessels perpetually bathed in pure water, such soft coloring of red earthenware and creamy surfaces, brown wood and polished tin, gray limestone and rich orange-red rust on the iron weights, and hooks, and hinges."

Rarely, if ever, does she show any irrepressible love for, any enthusiastic worship of, nature pure and simple. She describes scenes as she would draw a map for the convenience of the reader, to make her story plainer and more easily understood. She is too great a woman, too complete, not to admire what in nature is glorious; but this admiration is counterpoised and checked this side of enthusiasm by a greater interest in practical uses. For these practical uses, cleanly and tastefully brought about, are for her eyes the world's chiefest beauty.

With such logic, such a bent for analysis, such an

instinct for diving into the undercurrents of things, such aptitude for precise and perfect demonstration, such a purpose to enforce moral convictions, you see at once what the result must be. The author does not present to you a rotund world, created mysteriously in darkness, which is rent asunder only that light may fall on multiform and many-colored beauty, valleys and mountains, grassy knolls and bleak volcanoes, brooks and torrents, calms and tempests. She fears lest you should doubt its solidity, lest you should question the principle of its construction, lest you should think that its streams ought to run up hill, its trees bear fruit before blossoming, its harvest come before its seed-time. Therefore she carries on the making in your presence, expounds its principles, demonstrates its philosophy, shows that it is well done, convinces your judgment. She does not take it for granted that you know something of human nature and of the laws which govern it, something of world-building, and can infer motives from actions, and causes from effects.

Her world is, indeed, not made because it is good, but in order that you may be taught by seeing of what and how it is put together.

“ You could not live among such people ; you are stifled for want of an outlet toward something beautiful, great, or noble ; you are irritated with these dull men and women, as a kind of population out of keeping with the earth on which they live,—with this rich plain where the great river flows forever onward, and links the small pulse of the old

English town with the beatings of the world's mighty heart. A vigorous superstition, that lashes its gods or lashes its own back, seems to be more congruous with the mystery of the human lot than the mental condition of these emmet-like Dodsons and Tullivers.

"I share with you this sense of oppressive narrowness ; but it is necessary that we should feel it, if we care to understand how it acted on the lives of Tom and Maggie—how it has acted on young natures in many generations, that in the onward tendency of human things have risen above the mental level of the generation before them, to which they have been nevertheless tied by the strongest fibres of their hearts. The suffering, whether of martyr or victim, which belongs to every historical advance of mankind, is represented in this way in every town, and by hundreds of obscure hearths ; and we need not shrink from this comparison of small things with great ; for does not science tell us that its highest striving is after the ascertainment of a unity which shall bind the smallest things with the greatest ? In natural science, I have understood, there is nothing petty to the mind that has a large vision of relations, and to which every single object suggests a vast sum of conditions. It is surely the same with the observation of human life."

She tells you this herself. Do you not feel as if in a narrow school-room with low ceiling and imperfect ventilation, longing to get out into the free air of heaven, in sight of the clouds, and the green trees, and the illimitable space ? But the teacher says you must stay and study if you want to become good men and women, and so you read on, or listen to the

lecture, for now she is showing you by experiment and explanation that the smutty charcoal which you shrink from touching and the radiant diamond which you caress upon your bosom, are composed of the same elemental matter. Whether the coal offend or the diamond delight you is a secondary consideration. You did not come here simply to see gems. You must ascertain the unity of things, and hereafter have more respect for the charcoal.

The poet, that is to say, the great artist, like this writer, sees good in everything. Unlike her he sees it through ideality, and through ideality makes it known, having an unconquerable instinctive feeling that by increasing and diffusing such ideality he is inevitably making the world better.

It cannot be denied that George Eliot uses ideality. But, as intimated above, she employs it as some part of a complete apparatus for making an exact imitation of what is real. She pursues this object with grand steadiness and freshness of nerve, an ever-present discrimination, a perfectly clear conception of what she wants to do, an almost unfailing judgment of modes and materials of illustration. She brings to her task a very wide range of apparently exact knowledge. You are convinced that she could deliver instructive lectures on the intricacies of real-estate law, on medical science and its history, on statesmanship, on theology and its influence in the world, on political intrigues and the tricks of demagogues, on any of the exact sciences, on the syntax

of the Latin and Greek languages, not disdaining even to tell you how carpentry work is made, farms drained and tilled, cattle and the dairy cared for, quarries and mines worked, weaving done; how different men smoke their pipes differently, and the indications of character therein displayed; how toppers like their toddy mixed; how men and women of all classes talk and act; how comfortable or uncomfortable it is to be shaved by a barber. You are sure that her character is composed of many parts; that is to say, her humanity is large, full, and complete; that she is very catholic, very charitable, very tender-hearted; that she is kind to speechless animals and all helpless things.

“‘Poor dog!’ said Dinah, patting the rough, gray coat, ‘I’ve a strange feeling about the dumb things as if they wanted to speak, and it was a trouble to ’em because they couldn’t. I can’t help being sorry for the dogs always, though, perhaps, there’s no need. But they may well have more in them than they know how to make us understand, for we can’t say half what we feel, with all our words.’”

You notice her love for children, and how plainly she brings out their portraits by a few master-strokes.

“He drew little Bessie toward him, and set her on his knee. She shook her yellow curls out of her eyes and looked up at him, as she said:

“‘Zoo tome to tee ze zady? Zoo mek her peak? What zoo do to her? Tjiss her?’

“‘Do you like to be kissed, Bessie?’

“‘Det,’ said Bessie, immediately ducking down her head

very low, in resistance to the expected rejoinder. 'We've got two pups,' said young Daniel, emboldened by observing the gentleman's amenities toward Bessie. 'Shall I show 'em yer? One's got white spots.'"

Like this is the following picture of the child-woman, Tessa :

" 'Yes,' he said; 'but I can hear very well—I'm not deaf.'

" 'It is true; I forgot,' said Tessa, lifting her hands and clasping them. 'But Monna Lisa is deaf, and I live with her. She's a kind old woman, and I'm not frightened at her. And we live very well; we have plenty of nice things. I can have nuts if I like. And I'm not obliged to work now. I used to have to work, and I didn't like it; but I liked feeding the mules, and I should like to see poor Giannetta, the little mule, again. We've only got a goat and two kids, and I used to talk to the goat a good deal, because there was nobody else but Monna Lisa. But now I've got something else—can you guess what it is?' She drew her head back and looked with a challenging smile at Baldassarre, as if she had proposed a difficult riddle to him.

" 'No,' said he, putting aside his bowl, and looking at her dreamily. It seemed as if this young, prattling thing were some memory come back out of his own youth.

" 'You like me to talk to you, don't you?' said Tessa; 'but you must not tell anybody. Shall I fetch you a bit of cold sausage?'

"He shook his head, but he looked so mild now that Tessa felt quite at her ease.

" 'Well, then, I've got a little baby. Such a pretty *bambinetto*, with little fingers and nails! Not old yet; it

was born at the Natività, Monna Lisa says. I was married one Natività, a long while ago, and nobody knew. O, Santa Madonna! I didn't mean to tell you that.' "

"Tessa set up her shoulders and bit her lip, looking at Baldassarre as if this betrayal of secrets must have an exciting effect on him too. But he seemed not to care much; and perhaps that was the nature of strangers."

Note the distinctness of these delineations. You would say that no explanatory lectures should be needful to the comprehension of works drawn by so skilful a painter. Observe that which follows, quite as distinct, but of a different kind:

"On the broad marble steps of the Duomo there were scattered groups of beggars and gossiping talkers; here an old crone with white hair and hard, sunburned face, encouraging a round-capped baby to try its tiny bare feet on the warm marble, while a dog sitting near snuffed at the performance suspiciously; there a couple of shaggy-headed boys leaning to watch a small, pale cripple who was cutting a face on a cherry-stone; and above them on the wide platform men were making changing knots in laughing, desultory chat, or else were standing in close couples gesticulating eagerly."

You become aware that she is a keen observer of traits and personal peculiarities, and that she uses them adroitly to give prominence to individuality when you see Mr. Tulliver, as he gives expression to a novel thought, "turning his head on one side and giving his horse a meditative tickling on the flank," or "the wiry-faced Nolan pinching his under-lip

between his thumb and finger, and giving one of those wonderful universal shrugs by which he seemed to be recalling all his garments from a tendency to disperse themselves."

You see that she wields a graphic pen; that her pictures are remarkable for fidelity to nature, which is not copied more exactly in the Dutch paintings that she so much admires and takes for her models. She is not a sculptor, does not readily conceive form, but has an eye for harmony of colors when grouping details. The tones of her delineations are consonant; the state of the weather, of the sky, the clouds, and the earth is in unison with the sentiment of the scene. Her skill in choosing fit words to suggest a figure or present a side view is not easily surpassed. Her humor is charming, never pointless, notably rich.

"But a man of Sir Maximus's rank is like those antediluvian animals whom the system of things condemned to carry such a huge bulk that they really could not inspect their bodily appurtenances, and had no conception of their own tails; their parasites doubtless had a merry time of it, and often did extremely well when the high-bred Saurian himself was ill at ease."

"Arthur Donnithorne was moving about his sleeping-room, seeing his well-looking British person reflected in the old-fashioned mirrors, and stared at, from a dingy olive-green piece of tapestry, by Pharaoh's daughter and her maidens, who ought to have been minding the infant Moses."

You appreciate the many clever things which she

says, and you are made certain that she appreciates them herself:

“‘Sharp! Yes; her tongue is like a new-set razor. She’s quite original in her talk, too; one of those untaught wits that help to stock a country with proverbs. I told you that capital thing I heard her say about Craig—that he was like a cock who thought the sun had risen to hear him crow. Now, that’s an *Æsop’s* fable in a sentence.’”

The plots of her stories are generally well sustained and interesting; would be more absorbing were the reader’s enthusiasm not kept in check by cooling moral applications. The action is logical, impelled by adequate motives. It does not, however, always stop at the catastrophe, but after the final climax trickles along till gradually spent and lost to view, as in “*Romola*.” Yet this story, as a whole, approaches nearer to a work of art than any other of this author’s novels. At the same time it exhibits more bad taste in the use of foreign words and phrases than all the others. In her works, generally, she is too much tempted to use Latin and Greek terms. In “*Romola*” the Italian language is the stumbling-block. This is about the only important defect in her style, which, with trifling exceptions, is singularly pure, clear, and forcible, alike free from obscurity, incompleteness of expression, and superfluous words.

Her personages are mostly on one plane—the level of common humanity. She neither ascends to the

sublime nor descends to what is so low, so vile, or so horrible as to be repulsive. Her wit is strong, keen, ready, not "of a temporary nature, but rather dealing with the deeper and more lasting relations of things." You perceive that if she be not an artist she rarely or never transcends the limits of art; that she understands what is truly pathetic; that she finds great pleasure in bringing good to light; that she has deep and wide religious feeling; that she knows and loves gentle and careful housewifely duties; that she believes and teaches "that life to be the highest which is a conscious and voluntary sacrifice." You feel that she is a philosopher, a philanthropist, a great writer; you are not assured that she is one of the greatest novelists.

A NOVELIST WHO MEANS BUSINESS.

A FAMOUS writer asserts that public taste in England commends great circumspection to the novelist, saying to him: "Be moral. All your novels must be such as may be read by young girls. We are practical minds, and we would not have literature corrupt practical life. We believe in family life, and we would not have literature paint the passions which attack family life. We are Protestants, and have preserved something of the severity of our fathers against enjoyment and passions. Among these, love is the worst. Beware against resembling in this respect the most illustrious of our neighbors. Love is the hero of George Sand's novels. Married or not, she thinks it beautiful, holy, sublime in itself; and she says so. Don't believe this; and if you do, don't say it. George Sand makes us desire to be in love; do you make us desire to be married."

These being the sentiments of educated people in English society, we can understand how it is that Anthony Trollope is one of the most popular of English novelists. He writes as if such canons of taste and morality were always in his mind. Marriage, with money enough on the one side or the

other to make life easy, sleek, and respectable, luxurious likewise according to the notions of men and women of culture and refinement, is that for which his heroes and heroines, for the most part, are made. They are not mercenary. The farthest from it. Gold and silver and precious stones are as dust in the balance, almost an offence in their nostrils. They cannot be forced to marry for money. The difference between nothing on the one part and uncounted wealth on the other is no bar to a match. Magnanimity cannot perceive such an obstacle. According to this author's own pet phrase, "Love is lord of all;" and it is that love which always ends in marriage. When either the lover or the sweetheart has this untold wealth he brings on the wedding without taking the trouble to devise a fortune to either. When both are poor, he works out an inheritance for one or the other; and on the uncertainty whether this benevolent and plainly manifested purpose will be achieved hangs much of the reader's interest. Such magnanimity is admirable. It is reasonable and right. There should be no marriage where it does not exist. But it is uncommon nowadays; and in so far as it is uncommon in real life, it is in a fictitious personage ideal. And the author's use of it in the cases mentioned is a fair illustration of the extent to which he draws on ideality in the formation of his characters. In the main these are very practical, and not so far removed from the commonplace in their respective ranks as to excite astonishment.

Within such limits comparatively little imagination is required to make a consistent and probable story. Coupled with an excessive love of analyzing and expounding character, Mr. Trollope possesses no mean degree of inventive and logical power. The comedy grows out of this very development of character. The incidents related which go to make up the story proceed in probable, not to say necessary, sequence from the premises on which the narrative is founded. The novel is an argument. Each scene is the natural consequence of some that have preceded it. Neither logical nor material probability is violated. Hence the reader is never shocked, never greatly disturbed. His pleasure is tranquil, equable, hearty.

Indeed, this writer's imagination appears not to be excessive. He seems rather to copy than to create; to make books as a business rather than from the imperious necessity of overwhelming inspiration. He observes carefully, and can clearly describe what he sees; cares little for the beauties of nature or for nature herself, but loves the comforts, elegancies, and refinements of wealthy and well-bred people; esteems English gentleness, but finds no charm in low life; cannot well take the measure of or depict an eccentric character; has no affection for villains, but steals out of their company as quickly as possible.

As a business man he seems to have excellent judgment and much skill. He has studied the market. He has discovered what the largest public

taste demands. He makes his goods to suit it. Probably in doing this he has not violently to curb the mighty impulses of poetic genius ; nor is he forced to constrain his own inclination. He likes morality ; does not desire to feel overpowering emotions ; loves the tone, temper, and manner of the British public ; will not “ separate himself from his conscience, and lose sight of the practical.” He has said to himself, “ Do not skim over your subject, lay stress upon it ; do not pass over it lightly, impress it. Reckon also that your hearers are practical minds, lovers of the useful ; that they come here to be taught ; that you owe them solid truths ; that their common sense, somewhat contracted, does not fall in with hazardous extemporizations or doubtful hints ; that they demand worked-out refutations and complete explanations ; and that, if they have paid to come in, it was to hear advice which they might apply, and satire founded on proof.” And so, to satisfy at the same time his conscience and his patrons, he gives explanations, refutations, demonstrations almost without limit over and over again. Not only his own, but the consciences of his personages also, must be void of offence or persuaded into acquiescence. His characters carry on with themselves sound or sophistical reasoning, according to circumstances and inclination, to an extent and degree of skill in minute self-examination that would do credit to the pupils in a school of metaphysics. Few of them know whether they are really in love or not till they

have reasonably and coolly examined the question on all sides. They are, indeed, uncommonly reasonable creatures; common creatures idealized in this direction.

Only by an occasional indifference to the rules of English grammar does the author show that even his conscience has been seared in spots:

“What would be the feelings of such a woman as her.”

“They had become grander people than him.”

“There are things much sweeter than them.”

“No one knows him but I.”

“To such a one as me.”

“Instructions which no one but he himself could give to the counsellor.”

“A man believed to be him.”

Such errors as are set forth in these citations are far too common in Mr. Trollope's works to permit the supposition that they are accidental. To call them inexcusable is to characterize them mildly. Possibly with a purpose to make his style appear homely and strong, he not unfrequently makes use, in his own person, of phrases far from elegant. Let one illustration suffice. In describing a very solemn scene, he says,—

“When Sir Peregrine asked her whether he should seat her on the sofa, she slowly picked herself up, and, with her head still crouching toward the ground, placed herself where she before had been sitting.”

It would appear that, unconsciously or otherwise,

he permits himself to copy the style too often indulged in by reporters. For instance :

“It was Mr. Palliser’s hobby, and he was gratified at having this further opportunity of ventilating it.”

But it would be unfair, even by implication, to accuse a reporter of writing such a sentence as the following :

“It was an Alderney cow, and any man or women at all understanding in cows would at once have perceived that this cow was perfect in her kind.”

In frequent and inelegant use of the weak and utterly indefinite word “one,” instead of some strong definite noun or pronoun, Mr. Trollope successfully competes with many rivals. The manner in which he and his characters employ this despicable substitute may be seen from a few examples :

“If one were called upon for advice, one would think so much before one spoke.”

“How can one talk to one’s doctor openly and confidentially when one looks upon him as one’s worst enemy.”

“It quiets one for the day ; makes one so much fitter for one’s daily trials.”

The author’s personages are made to talk in a style quite as common, not to say low, as that to which he too often falls in writing, even though they be the great ones of the earth, the well bred, the educated :

“‘And then the schemes which he tried on with the bishop,’ said Mrs. Proudie.”

Mrs. Proudie was the bishop’s wife.

“‘The bishop was too many for him,’ suggested Mrs. Harold Smith, very maliciously.”

Mrs. Harold Smith was the wife of a gentleman who gave lectures.

“And then the lecture was gratis,—a fact which is always borne in mind by an Englishman when he comes to reckon up and calculate the way in which he is treated. When he pays his money he takes his choice; he may be impatient, or not, as he likes.”

Vulgar and slang phrases like these may be found upon very many of this author’s pages. Should any one think that too much stress is here laid upon correct and elegant style and language in works of fiction, especially if he be a conscientious Englishman, making or reading novels for the sake of morality and instruction, let him consider that, happily or otherwise, very many people who are carelessly esteemed persons of intelligence and cultivation read very few books except works of fiction; that novels constitute almost the only literature with which a great majority of those who are “fond of books” are personally acquainted; that the English classics are known to them only by reputation; that they probably could not confidently name a single master of English style as such; that their notions of correct

style, good grammar, and elegant diction are received from writers of novels; and that thus the novelist may become responsible for the prevalence of a vulgar, coarse, slangous tone of conversation, thought, and feeling in what should be polite society. A popular novelist may show how good young women inevitably marry good young men, and have a plenty of money; how bad young women do not marry good young men, and, if they are very bad, do not marry anybody; how the good young men not only marry good young women, but are sure to marry rich ones, or themselves to have a large inheritance as a reward for being good and getting married; and how the bad young men have a very bad time generally, and can hardly find a good young woman who will even listen to their suits; and yet he may do much injury to the taste, tone, and delicacy of his readers. It is possible to have a moral conscience, and at the same time to have no literary conscience. At any rate this is a fair inference from the works of some writers.

As has been intimated, Mr. Trollope has the moral conscience. He deals out rewards and punishments, generally at least, in a way to show an earnest disposition to be just. Meek, simple, honest, self-denying Mr. Harding gives up the wardenship of the hospital, with all its emoluments, from a sense of duty; but he is the gainer, rather than the loser, in consequence. All goes well with him thereafter, and he dies at a good old age in the midst of his children, by

whom he has always been honored. Archdeacon Grantly is proud, imperious, ambitious, and fails to obtain the bishopric. Mr. Slope is mean, dishonest, cunning, unclean, and comes to grief. Mrs. Proudie is domineering, greedy of ecclesiastical honors, bigoted, quarrelsome, without gentleness, tenderness, or humility, and is so dominated and humbled that her heart breaks. Eleanor is a good girl, a loving and dutiful daughter, and has the reward of being twice married: the first time to a rich man who leaves her all his money; the second time to a scholar, a gentleman, and a dean. Bertram is self-willed, proud, obstinate. Miss Woddington is like him. They both suffer for years, and when they have been reformed by suffering they are married. Harcourt is heartless, scheming, unscrupulous, something of a trickster; he appears to prosper for a time, is separated from his wife, and blows out his brains. Adela is sweet, gentle, patient, generous, just, and marries her first and only love. Dr. Thorne is a man of sense, correct conduct, noble instincts, unswerving from the standard of right, and marries a great heiress. Mary Thorne is as good as she can be, inherits a big fortune, and marries the young squire. Frank Gresham persists in faithful love to his poor sweetheart in spite of opposition and temptations, and finally marries, and through her comes into possession of the alienated paternal estate. The De Coureys are a bad lot and fare badly. Augustus Crosbie jilts a good girl to marry one of them, and fares worse.

John Eames is sportively unfaithful to the woman he adores and loses her. Lilly Dale persists in loving an unworthy suitor and is married to no one, or was not when the last book came from the press. Mr. Crawley is honest after all, and his sufferings work together for his good. Grace Crawley marries her noble-hearted lover, as so good a girl should. Madeline Stavely is an excellent young woman, and marries Felix Graham, an excellent young man. Lady Mason has redeeming qualities, and is, therefore, acquitted by the jury to undergo a modified and mild punishment. Lady Laura loves Phineas, but rejects him because he is poor, marries Mr. Kennedy because he is rich, leads a wretched married life, is separated from her husband, continues to love Phineas, who long since ceased to love her, is very desolate and wretched. Madame Max Gaesler is prudent, true, honorable, and marries the man of her choice. And so on through volume after volume.

It is, indeed, necessary for the reader to go through many volumes with different titles before he can be sure that he has come to the end of what the author has to say about any of his characters. He seems never to cease talking of them till they die, nor even then in some cases. He has gathered together a population in Barsetshire and is its gossip in chief. His personages soon become old acquaintances, and the reader feels that tranquil and agreeable interest in learning of their doings and sayings that he does in listening to accounts of love-making, love quar-

rels, domestic unhappiness, money gains and losses among his neighbors. This interest is never unpleasantly intense and exciting. The book can be laid aside at bedtime without intolerable regret. It does not rob the reader of needful sleep, or tempt him to neglect agreeable duties. In this respect, also, this writer's works are harmless. They have that degree of power which induces attentive perusal, and keeps the mind within reach of their healthful influences.

Whoever seeks entertainment in Mr. Trollope's writings will rarely be called upon to sympathize with passion, rarely be subjected to the fatigue of strong emotions; will run no risk of having his judgment unsettled by enthusiasm. He may finish the study of one book fresh, vigorous, ready to enter upon that of another. He will not be disturbed or delighted by children; will not be offended by close contact with very base or very humble people; will not be asked to mourn over their sorrows with outcasts; nor will his heart be broken by the sufferings of the very poor and outwardly degraded, the victims of this world's cruel injustice or of their own amiable weaknesses, in whom the diviner parts of men and women still survive. He will find himself in the cultivated society of Bassetshire, or in other company equally good. He will learn how bishops and churchmen of rank think, talk, act. He will come to know intimately esquires, knights, baronets, barons, viscounts, earls, sometimes even will see a

duke, and will hear "the royalty" mentioned. He will make acquaintances with attorneys, barristers, judges. He will hobnob with Cabinet ministers, under secretaries, and Parliamentary whips. He will feel himself quite at home among students and fellows of the universities. Except on rare occasions he will be in the temperate atmosphere of good breeding, with nothing but some bad grammar and frequent rather vulgar phrases to disturb his equanimity. And he will gather much instruction. He becomes more or less expert as a fox-hunter, and grows to be more or less intimate with the kennel. He sees how, just at the right time and in the right place, a daring rider may break his arm and several of his ribs. He is made aware how to make up a cause for the courts of law; how Mr. Chaffenbrass cross-examines a witness; and how by a similar process Mr. Furnival perverts the truth. He is informed as to the operations of politics; knows the real motive which by an euphemism is called patriotism; learns how a leader of the opposition may take the wind out of his antagonist's sails. He becomes familiar with church matters, perceives that the clergy are men. He discovers that even great people think quite as much of money as of rank. And he is taught a variety of ways, all nearly resembling each other, in which courting may properly be done.

Not only do Mr. Trollope's personages talk much sound doctrine, but not unfrequently the author

comes in his own character to enunciate excellent common sense, and instruct his readers by dissertations and homilies. Taking up as a text something said by some one of the persons of the story, he preaches his little, sometimes his rather long, sermons :

“‘I wonder whether you ever think of the old days when we used to be so happy in Keppel Street?’ Ah me, how often in after-life, in those successful days when the battle has been fought and won, when all seems outwardly to go well—how often is this reference made to the happy days in Keppel Street! It is not the prize that can make us happy; it is not even the winning of the prize, though for one short half-hour of triumph that is pleasant enough. The struggle, the long hot hour of the honest fight, the grinding work—when the teeth are set, and the skin moist with sweat and rough with dust, when all is doubtful, and sometimes desperate; when a man must trust to his own manhood, knowing that those around him trust to it not at all—that is the happy time of life. There is no human bliss equal to twelve hours of work with only six hours in which to do it. And when the expected pay for that work is worse than doubtful, the inner satisfaction is so much the greater. Oh, those happy days in Keppel Street, or it may be over in dirty lodgings in the Borough, or somewhere near Marylebone workhouse—anywhere for a moderate weekly stipend. Those were to us, and now are to others, and always will be to many, the happy days of life. How bright was love, and how full of poetry! Flashes of wit glanced here and there, and how they came home and warmed the cockles of the heart! And the

unfrequent bottle! Methinks that wine has utterly lost its flavor since those days. There is nothing like it; long work, grinding, weary work, work without pay, hopeless work; but work in which the worker trusts himself, believing it to be good. Let him, like Mohammed, have one other to believe in him, and surely nothing else is needed. 'Ah me! I wonder whether you ever think of the old days when we used to be so happy in Keppel Street?'

"Nothing makes a man so cross as success, or so soon turns a pleasant friend into a captious acquaintance. Your successful man eats too much, and his stomach troubles him; he drinks too much, and his nose becomes blue. He wants pleasure and excitement, and roams about looking for satisfaction in places where no man ever found it. He frets himself with his banker's book, and everything tastes amiss to him that has not on it the flavor of gold. The straw of an omnibus always stinks; the linings of the cabs are filthy. There are but three houses in London at which an eatable dinner may be obtained. And yet a few years since how delicious was that cut of roast goose to be had for a shilling at the eating-house near Golden Square! Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Green, Mrs. Walker and all the other mistresses, are too vapid and stupid and humdrum for endurance. The theatres are as dull as Lethe, and politics have lost their salt. Success is the necessary misfortune of life, but it is only to the very unfortunate that it comes early."

An excellent discourse, you will say, containing much common sense, and sounding with the ring of true manliness. But you will say, also, that you do not care to have the action of an interesting scene arrested in order that you may listen to it. And you

will say, furthermore, if you reflect upon it, that its introduction into such a scene is utterly inartistic; that such introduction is inconsistent with the purposes of art; that it must destroy any work of art, as such, in which it may appear.

Mr. Trollope is, indeed, not an artist; at any rate, not a good artist. His business is to make books for sale, the more volumes the better. These books must contain an interesting story in order that buyers may take them. They serve, also, as media through which the public may be made acquainted with the author's personal convictions, theories, sentiments. These are instructive and they increase the size of the work. He passes by no opportunity for interesting reflections, remarks, essays, dissertations. Bertram is at Jerusalem. He meets there a company of English tourists. They have a picnic party in the valley of Jehoshaphat, "immediately over the ashes of James the Just." The occasion thus made is too good to be lost. The author must introduce some remarks about the peculiar characteristics of English travellers:

"None but Englishmen or Englishwomen do such things as this. To other people is wanting sufficient pluck for such enterprises; is wanting also a certain mixture of fun, honest independence, and bad taste. Let us go into some church on the Continent—in Italy, we will say—where the walls of the churches still boast of the great works of the great masters. Look at that man standing on the very altar steps while the priest is saying his mass; look at his gray

shooting-coat, his thick shoes, his wide-awake hat stuck under one arm and his stick under the other, while he holds his opera-glass to his eyes. How he shuffles about to get the best point of sight, quite indifferent as to clergy or laity ! All that bell-ringing, incense-flinging, and breast-striking is nothing to him ; he has paid dearly to be brought thither ; he has paid the guide who is kneeling a little behind him ; he is going to pay the sacristan who attends him ; he is quite ready to pay the priest himself, if the priest would only signify his wish that way ; but he has come there to see that fresco, and see it he will,—respecting that he will soon know more than either the priest or his worshippers. Perhaps some servant of the Church, coming to him with submissive, almost suppliant gesture, begs him to step back just for one moment. The lover of art glares at him with insulted look, and hardly deigns to notice him further ; he merely turns his eye to his Murray, puts his hat down on the altar-step, and goes on studying his subject. All the world—German, Frenchman, Italian, Spaniard—all men of all nations know that that ugly gray shooting-coat must contain an Englishman. He cares for no one. If any one upsets him, he can do much toward righting himself ; and if more be wanted has he not Lord Malmesbury or Lord Clarendon at his back ? But what would this Englishman say if his place of worship were disturbed by some wandering Italian ?”

Very just, you will say ; a truthful description, certainly ; well worthy to take a place in the correspondence of a newspaper or a book of travels. But in the mean time the picnic is waiting. Such interpolations are of very frequent occurrence.

Nor is it in this respect alone that this author sins against art, retards the action and dulls the interest of his stories. He introduces too many characters, many of them mere passing acquaintances, who serve only to distract attention from the general subject of thought. Sometimes a counterplot and story run parallel with the principal narrative, yet have no necessary connection with and no effect upon it; as, for instance, in "*The Last Chronicle of Barset*." Here Lilly Dale, the loves of John Eames, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton and her friends, Mr. Crosbie, the Van Sievers, Dalrymple, Miss Desmolines, and several other personages act a comedy entirely independent of the principal play. It would be easy to separate entirely the two stories, with advantage to each. Not unfrequently the author takes some of his characters quite out of the limits which should bound his plan, with no other conceivable purpose or result than to make them talk with a deaf old woman in order to show what funny mistakes she can make, how she uses her ear-trumpet, and how hard it is to converse with her. In this way he easily makes what in a variety show would be called a character sketch, and forces into his drama a little comedy. One example of this fault may be found in "*The Bertrams*," where the author sends Miss Todd and Adela to visit Mrs. Leake. Mrs. Leake appears nowhere else in the story, has absolutely nothing to do with the plot, nor does this visit in any way affect the action. But Mrs. Leake is deaf, and Mr. Trollope likes deaf women.

This gentleman has indeed little conception of form ; knows little of color. He is rather a weaver than a painter or a sculptor. He weaves fabrics reasonably strong, of an equal texture, made up for the most part of neutral tints, well calculated to do good service. It is for this purpose that they are made ; and this purpose seems to be always in the author's mind. "This has its advantages no doubt ; art suffers by it if the public gains. Though your characters give the best examples, your works will be of less value. No matter ; you may console yourself with the thought that you are moral. Your lovers will be uninteresting ; for the only interest natural to their age is the violence of passion, and you cannot paint passion."

The characters drawn by Mr. Trollope are generally distinct individuals. The reader feels that he has met and known such people. They never violate probability, or such consistency as is common among mankind. Their acts have sufficient motives, and the author never fails to make these motives known. Indeed, the reader who shall carefully study all the analyses furnished for the enlightenment of his understanding, and not unfrequently repeated several times in the limits of one book, will probably know more of their incentives than the actors themselves. Although choosing to depict society in which the nobility and gentry mingle freely, as an author Mr. Trollope is plainly not a snob. He values a man for his manhood, not for his title or social rank.

Some of his sharpest satire is aimed at members of the aristocracy.

His books are altogether wholesome, contain much very pleasant entertainment, and not a little good instruction. He loves domestic scenes, British homes, all that is most characteristic in the most agreeable English life. So well has he portrayed the society in which he finds such pleasure, notwithstanding literary and artistic faults, that his readers will sympathize with him when he says,—

“To me Basset has been a real county, and its city a real city, and the spires and towers have been before my eyes, and the voices of the people are thrown to my ears and the pavements of the city ways are familiar to my footsteps.”

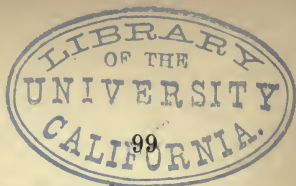
A CRUDE NOVELIST.

RHODA BROUGHTON holds an acknowledged place as a writer of English novels; her books find ready publishers and many readers. These facts indicate that something in these works pleases lovers of fiction. What this something is we shall try to discover.

Time was when English readers, as well as writers, held some acquaintance with English grammar, loved correct and elegant diction, would not tolerate slovenliness and blunder, when a good and pure style was a passport to admiration and popularity. But that time seems to have passed away. The boasted general diffusion of learning has made a practical knowledge of English grammar a useless, and therefore a neglected accomplishment; has shown that a fair style and choice diction are matters of study or care, or both, and therefore unworthy the attention of genius. At any rate some novelists seem to thrive and grow rich through, or spite of, the neglect of these things. With the greater portion of readers the only question is whether the story be interesting. To be interesting it must be exciting. To be exciting it must be vehement; it must arouse the stronger, that is, the coarser impulses and sympa-

thies of mankind. Horror is a sharper and more sickening sensation than terror; therefore to awaken horror is deemed better than to excite terror. True, the canons of art forbid the appearance of anything horrible. But we have nothing to do with art; we are guided by inspiration. Licentious passions are more violent than well-tempered love or chaste affections; therefore licentious passions must be set free, love unbridled, and affections perverted. A new word, a word erroneously formed, a French phrase, a German sentence, an Italian proverb, a Spanish couplet, a Latin verse, a Greek term, will attract more attention than any good English noun, verb, or particle; therefore let the foreign expressions be used whenever an opportunity can be found or made. Few readers can understand their meaning; hence the author will have the credit of learning and profundity. Such alien helps are easily obtained. Any friendly sophomore can furnish them to order. The pedantry is cheap, like the literature. And why should not the literature be plentiful and cheap when, as in restaurants where viands are sold at low prices, the cold bits of yesterday may make the hash of to-day, and the residue of that furnish the mince-pie for to-morrow? The name is changed, the dish is called new, the substance is essentially the same.

If the style is the woman, as well as the man, Rhoda Broughton must be a somewhat flippant, very bright and vivacious, rather irreverent, daring, self-sufficient, untutored person, possessing uncommon



natural talent, and power which has never been mastered or disciplined; whose taste is, in some respects, irremediably bad, or has never received any proper cultivation. She must be like a neglected garden with a rich soil, where flowers and weeds grow rankly together, and where the crops repeat themselves rapidly, with little variation in shape, color, or quality. She has a feverish anxiety to arrest attention. Many persons who may never have read her books have doubtless noticed their advertised titles, "Red as a Rose is She," "Cometh up as a Flower," "Not Wisely, but too Well," "Good-by, Sweetheart."

The peculiarity of title is not the only thing in which these works resemble each other. They are all made after one general plan, perhaps not purposely, probably not even consciously. They are all the fruits of one conception, and are as much alike as if they had been produced at one birth. Evidently they followed each other rapidly into the world. The indiscretions of the author were too swiftly repeated. The heroines are all "red as a rose;" that is to say, they all have a most uncomfortable propensity to blush violently under any and all circumstances, notwithstanding the fact that for the most part they are rather hoidenish, and not at all timid, very reckless in fact. These heroines fall desperately in love at first sight with some uncommonly big fellow, who either lies on the ground at the girl's feet, making a mould of his gigantic pro-

portions in the soft herbage, while he "gazes up at" her; or he stands by her side while she "gazes up at" him. Sometimes the girls "beam up at," often "smile up at" the lovers, rarely, perhaps never, look at them. One of these heroines, Kate Chester by name, seems to be a reservoir of "green light," which she "shoots out of" her "green eyes" with magical effects. "And she shoots out green light of intoxication and mischief from under the shady black hat." From which it would appear that she carried intoxication under that hat as many a fellow carries a brick.

These big lovers are generally strong, rude men, whose passions have had free scope and become powerful. They are devourers of women, take at least half a dozen on toast for breakfast every morning or night; have probably done so habitually till they meet the heroine, who, of course, is the *bonne bouche*. These heroines, for the most part, are predisposed to consumption. At any rate they are likely to become consumptive, are brought very low, generally die, but not always. Nothing can kill the heroes but an accident; they are such big, hearty fellows. Of course, the suggested contrast is charming. We weary of its constant repetition, however. We do not care, under different titles, to buy the same picture over and over again. We begin to desire a big sweetheart and a little lover; to see her bend him over her knee when he is bad, toss him up and down in her hands, and talk to him of his footie-tooties when he is good; or anything by way of a change.

As these two characters, hero and heroine, very slightly varied, appear in all Miss Broughton's earlier works, so do their foils. An unlucky, manly, poor soldier lover, who goes away with his troop to some outlandish place and is killed, or fevered and plagued to death, like Robert Brandon in "*Red as a Rose is She*," and Dick McGregor in "*Cometh up as a Flower*;" a quiet, well-bred, unfeeling, selfish, calculating, beautiful woman of the world, given to hypocritical intrigues against the heroine, like Miss Blessington in "*Red as a Rose*," etc., and Sister Dolly in "*Cometh up*," etc. Even the more subordinate passages in the different books are counterparts of each other. The old Puritan mother with her Calvinistic talk, reading or pretending to read, and recommending to others works on hell-fire and eternal damnation, with titles frightful enough to raise the hair on any young girl's head, appears in "*Red as a Rose is She*," as Mrs. Brandon, and as Lady Lancaster in "*Cometh up as a Flower*." Not even the old dog which has a part in each work is spared. He, too, must die over and over, and each time licking somebody's hand.

Now, this repetition of fictitious action and personages indicates certainly that the author writes too much, produces books too rapidly; possibly, also, that the vein from which she mines her materials is very narrow, and scanty in varieties. These faults, or deficiencies, however, are of a somewhat negative kind, and need cause no feeling of irritation; a

remark which cannot be justly applied to the manner in which much of her work is done, the almost constant straining for effect, notable contempt for the rules of grammar and taste, and many affectations.

Observe, for instance, how "one" is made to do the work of all kinds of nouns and pronouns, and how awkwardly the task is achieved :

"Bending down one's head over one's work sends all the blood in one's body into it."

"Causing Miss Craven to give one of those starts that make one feel as if one literally jumped out of one's skin, and fill one with ungodly wrath against the occasion of them."

"I think that one's parents ought to apologize to one for bringing one, without asking one's leave, into such a disagreeable place as this world is."

"I hate going back the same way one came, it shows such a want of invention."

"It strikes me as one of the few instances in which one's experience tallies with what one reads in novels, the awkward knack people have of interrupting one at the wrong moment."

"One cannot fancy the world without one, can one? One knows that, not long ago, there *was*, and not long hence there *will be*, no *I*; but one cannot realize it!"

"I'd rather never see a human face all the year round, except my own, of course. It's always pleasant to see that, looking at one in the glass—always except when one's nose gets red."

Further citations to illustrate this all-pervading,

inexcusable, and offensive fault would be tedious. Quite as inexcusable and offensive is the author's mode of forming comparatives and superlatives: "—replies Miss Blessington, rather sharper than is her wont;" "he only says in a kind, anxious voice, and plainlier still with kind, anxious eyes;" "and leaning closer over her;" "and falls to weeping sorelier than ever;" "it is in silence that a good, brave man meetliest takes his death-blow;" "heaving up and down rather quicker than usual;" "and rarer still read any reviews;" "as they are jogging a little brisklier than usual;" "gathering her wraps closer about her;" "on shoulders that mayhap may bear it stouter;" "remembering how much deeper she had sinned;" "for he can see plainlier now;" "pursuing the hotter the more;" "shines also hotter."

Even when her superlatives are formed with some reference to the usages of the English language they are generally very rough and inelegant: "the pennilesses, improvidentest, happiest pair of sweethearts in Great Britain." "The old woman of exaltedest rank."

Such licenses, however, are not enough for the free spirit of this author. Familiar or strange English words, even when distorted into new shapes, do not suffice to express her meaning. She must use terms unknown to the best dictionary makers; as, for instance, "havering," "chivies," used as a verb, and "writhen:" "Dolly on a dark oak settle with a

carved and writhen back." Liberty to make words that look like English is, however, not enough for her ambition. French and Latin commonplaces and Greek terms, sometimes printed in Greek letters, are forced awkwardly to do duty for some simple and elegant English phrase. Occasionally she is kind enough to translate the Greek terms after using them, but not always: "to my *Philon Hetor*, or dear heart." "I don't think he got any *kydos* from either of his dear friends for his impartiality." The use of the Latin and French phrases would be more excusable, were they not so evidently dragged in by the collar, as it were, when no possible room for their appearance can be perceived, except that the author may display her possessions. To tell the truth these possessions look not only thoroughly out of place, but very much as if they were borrowed for the occasion.

Such faults as those indicated are pardonable only when committed by a very young author. They are, indeed, indications of youthfulness and inexperience. In Miss Broughton's books are other signs of juvenility. Among them are plain efforts to strike the reader, impatience of judicious restraints, a wasteful use of power, an over-fondness for things that are themselves glowing and impressive. She likes to make "men's hot blood surge;" to describe her heroines in the hero's arms while "he is kissing her repeatedly," or laying "his lips upon the blossom of her sweet mouth;" to tell how "he wrapped his

arms around her as she stood before him, tighter, tighter, and bent down his head from its stately height to her small, uplifted face, nearer, nearer, till their lips met and were joined in a wedlock so fast, so long-enduring, so firm, that it seemed as if they never could be divorced again."

She will strain a point to show that she has no false modesty; rather enjoys shocking very delicate people; detests all affectations and shams except those which she practises herself, such, for instance, as her pretentious display of cheap acquaintance with different languages; seems to delight in death as a subject of apostrophe and discussion, because death is a very terrible thing to most readers; in the grave, corruption, mould, dust, worms, "lobbies and woodlice," also, because they are objects from which the ordinary man recoils, and which thus can produce a powerful sensation; therefore she exposes them, and not unfrequently almost to the point of disgust. She does not shrink from asking and suggesting many theological questions not at all new, and writing many common enough platitudes about them; shrinks not either from mentioning sacred names and speaking of sacred things in a very light and flippant manner, to say the least of it. She not only seems to defy all ordinary constraints, but to aim at a constant demonstration of her wild freedom.

All this is evidence of a certain kind of rude strength, if you please. Indeed, there can be no question that, within certain narrow limits, this

author possesses uncommon natural powers. She indistinctively likes virility, wants her admirers to be men, and detests sentimental creatures, as is shown by her use of big lovers, and in other ways. Her heroines also are strong after their kind, though their kind is not generally well bred or delicate. They are models which no man would wish his sisters, no mother her daughters to copy. But to the reader who does not belong to their family, whom they can in no way mortify and shame by their vagaries, they are fresh, interesting, full of life, strong if not gentle. They are, for the most part, very clearly and consistently delineated, and have a marked, positive individuality. The characters of the men, also, are fairly well defined, but not so distinctly as are those of the women. The lover and his sweetheart are the all-important personages in each book; the others are seen somewhat obscurely. The author's own qualities and characteristics appear more naturally in the women than in the men. We conceive that in the following extract she sketches herself, to some extent, at least:

"It was to me a matter of unfeigned and heart-felt gratulation that my mother died in my infancy. As often as I came in contact with well-drilled daughters, nestling under the wing of a portly mamma, I hugged myself on my freedom. My father was more to me than ten mothers. If my mother had lived, thought I, I should have been only second in his affections; some one else would have been nearer his heart than I—an idea almost

too bitter to be contemplated. If I had had a mother I should have had to mend my gloves, and keep my hair tidy, and practice on the piano, and be initiated into the mysteries of stitching."

Miss Broughton has a happy knack at descriptions, can write admirably when she will, depicts scenes very graphically. The cleverness in the use of words which crops out all through her books, makes her occasional slovenliness, her conceits, her outrages on the English language and on good taste, all the more inexcusable. She loves nature, good, strong, healthy nature, with a poet's love, and can paint it with a poet's pen :

"Morning is come again. The sun cannot bear to be long away from his young sweetheart, the earth, so he has come back hasting, with royal pomp, with his crown of gay gold beams on his head, with his flame-cloak about his strong shoulders, and with a great troop of light, flaky clouds—each with a reflex of his red smile on its courtier face—at his back. He has come back to see himself in the laughing blue eyes of her seas and streams, and to rest at noontide, like a sleepy giant, on her warm green lap.

"The daily miracle—the miracle that none can contest, to which all are witness, has been worked—the resurrection of the world. And this resurrection is not partial, not limited to humanity, as that final one is toward which the eyes of the Christian church have been looking steadfastly for eighteen centuries and a half; but every beast and bird and flower has shaken off Death's sweet semblance, his gentle counterfeit, and is feeling, in bounding

vein and rushing sap, the ecstatic bliss of the mystery of life. If we never slept, we should not know the joy of waking; if we never woke, we should not know the joy of sleep. How, I marvel, shall we feel the happiness of heaven, if we never lose, and consequently never regain it? The thrushes and blackbirds are already in the midst of their glees and madrigals and part songs. They sing the same songs every day, so that they are quite perfect in them; and they are all very joyful ones. In their sweet flute language there are no words expressive of sorrow or pain: they know of no minor key. There were twenty roses born last night, and the flowers are all rejoicing greatly. They are smiling and whispering and gossiping together; the sweet peas, like pink and purple butterflies,

‘ . . . on tiptoe for a flight,
With wings of delicate flush o’er virgin white,’

each half inclined to hover away with the young west wind that is sighing such a little gentle story all about himself into their ears. The lambs, grown so big and woolly that one might almost mistake them for their mothers, are leaping and racing and plunging about in the field below the house, in the giddiness of youth, unprescient of the butcher.”

Many, indeed most of the scenes in which Miss Broughton’s characters appear are exceedingly fresh, vigorous, well sustained, clearly set forth, life-like. The language of her personages is for the most part terse, vivacious, pointed, strong, often witty, not unfrequently mingled with popular slang, however, and many inelegant expressions. Look, for exam-

ple, at the picture of the Brandon family at Sunday's dinner; at the description of Jock's death, in "Red as a Rose is She;" at the passage between Lenore and Paul, terminated by the upsetting of the boat, and many others in "Good-by, Sweetheart." In a circumscribed way this author uses much dramatic power; witness many of the scenes in "Not Wisely but Too Well." In the four books which we have mentioned the author's merits greatly overbalance her faults, are as strongly marked, and give flattering promise of superior excellence in the future if she can be induced to submit to certain liberal rules of art and good taste, will enlarge her scope of thought, her variety of character and incident, and be content to bring her offspring into the world only at reasonable intervals of time, and after suitable periods of gestation.

This promise has to a certain extent been already fulfilled. "Nancy," her last book, is in some respects superior to any that have preceded it from the same source. It is in the main more correctly written, its style is in better taste, while lacking nothing of the freshness and vigor which in so great a degree characterize her earlier works. The heroine, who in other regards is well drawn and reasonable enough, has, however, one grave defect. In all her intercourse with Frank Musgrave she is by far too innocently stupid, or too stupidly innocent—incredibly so. This is the greatest fault of the work. On this intercourse and its results hinges the chief interest

of the story. The author designed to keep Nancy blameless, and yet cause her to excite such suspicions as to bring on the kind and degree of trouble dear to novel-readers. But she failed to accomplish this artistically and well through want of skill or want of thought. Nancy is impossibly unsuspecting and unobservant. Minor faults of the kind with which we are already familiar are not infrequent :

“ ‘ Every one knows best where his own shoe pinches,’ I answer vernacularly.”

“ None but a God-intoxicated man could tell the glories of that serenely shining and suave morn.”

“ Turning his eyes from his own face and fixing them on the less interesting object of mine.”

“ Perhaps she may be stupid! Certainly she is not affording.”

“ She continues, eyeing him with contemplated candor.”

“ But fortunately no one but I is listening to him.”

“ My legs ache mostly a good deal, and I feel dull and drowsy from want of sleep.”

Still, an important advance has been attempted in this work with very encouraging success. Miss Broughton has herself felt the necessity of working a new vein, of producing something novel, of not continuing to repeat the same old story. Sir Roger is an admirable personage, a complete gentleman, thoroughly well drawn. Several of the subordinate characters are clearly and well delineated. The descriptions of the children, Nancy’s brothers and sisters, their doings and sayings, could hardly be

surpassed. Each one of them has a distinct, completely individualized, consistent personality. The scenes in which they take part, and in fact the author's domestic scenes, almost without exception, are notably life-like.

"There is no doubt that on some days the devil reigns with a more potent sway over people than on others. To-night he has certainly entered into the boys. He often does a little, but this evening he is holding a great and mighty carnival among them. While father's strong, hard voice vibrates in a loud, dull monotone through the silent room, they are engaged in a hundred dumb yet ungodly antics behind his back.

"Algernon has thrust his head far out between the rungs of his chair-back, and affects to be unable to withdraw it again, making movements of simulated suffocation. The Brat is stealthily walking on his knees across the space that intervenes between them to Barbara, with intent, as I too well know, of unseemly pinchings. If father unbuttons his eyes, or moves his head one barleycorn, we are all dead men. I hold my breath in a nervous agony. Thank heaven! the harsh recitation still flows on with equable loud slowness. In happy ignorance of his offspring's antics, father is still asking, or rather ordering, the Almighty (for there is more of command than entreaty in his tone) to prosper the High Court of Parliament. Also the Brat is now returning to his place, travelling with surprising noiseless rapidity over the Turkey carpet, dragging his shins and his feet after him. I draw a long breath of relief, and drop my hot face into my spread hands. My peace, however, is not of long duration. I am aroused by a sort of

choking snort from Tou Tou, who is beside me—a snort that seems compounded of mingled laughter and pain, and, looking up, detect Bobby in the act of deftly puncturing one of her long bare legs with a long brass pin, which he has found straying, after the vagabond manner of pins, over the carpet.”

Here follows, very briefly, a companion sketch :

“ The devil in the boys is fairly quiescent to-night, and our evening devotions pass over with tolerable peace ; the only *contretemps* being that the Brat, having fallen asleep, remains on his knees when ‘ Amen ’ raises the rest of the company from theirs, and has to be privily and heavily kicked to save him from discovery and ruin.”

An equal degree of cleverness is shown by the author in depicting very many other scenes. Her strength, her wit, vivacity, brilliancy, the great talents which she has so clearly shown, we gladly admit and heartily praise. As before intimated, they serve at the same time to aggravate and render unpardonable her gross faults. If she will remember that “ art does not come by inspiration,” and that “ reading and writing (do not) come by nature,” taking care to cultivate, develop, master and manifest her rare powers with propriety and taste, a very brilliant future is before her.

A GOSSIPING NOVELIST.

As the production of fictitious composition increases, the rules by which it is to be judged should be applied with more and more severity, and not, as seems to be the case, with less and less. These rules are now well enough understood by all sagacious critics. Yet many authors appear to be ignorant, or, at any rate, heedless, of them. Of these, Mrs. Margaret Oliphant is an example. She holds a conspicuous place among English novelists, though not in the first rank. Her books have found much favor, especially among writers of literary notices for the newspapers and magazines. How far she may safely be imitated, what her merits and demerits may be, and what is her just rank among writers of fiction, more thorough criticism alone can determine. This is especially true if it be a fact that "a man's genius is like a clock: it has its mechanism, and among its parts a mainspring." If you "find out this spring, show how it communicates movements to the others, pursue this movement from part to part down to the hands in which it ends," you may determine the kind of work that it will do. Whether he will or not, the really competent critic follows this process reversed.

From the action of the hands on the dial he works back to the mainspring, notes its motive power and the manner in which it is regulated. To study the writing is to study the writer.

A thoroughly good novel demonstrates on the part of its maker the possession of certain distinct characteristics. He should have, to some degree at least, the eye of a painter. He must be able to discriminate between what is picturesque in description and what is unpicturesque and wearisome, as well as between what is and what is not worthy to be described. Moreover, he should have a sculptor's keen sense of harmonious proportions to restrain him when tempted to add to his work matter which in itself may be good, but which, so used, will only mar the symmetry of the composition and interrupt or delay the action of the story.

In a word, as the great painter is said to contain the sculptor also, so the novelist should contain both sculptor and painter. Mrs. Oliphant seems to contain neither in any high degree of development. Unfortunately, many authors of her class, whose works are eagerly and widely read, show a shameful negligence of even elementary studies. Of these Mrs. Oliphant is one, as further on will more fully appear. She has, however, unquestionable natural powers. She contrives interesting, often strong, stories, but mars them in the telling. Descriptions abound, in place and out of place; descriptions of houses, of rooms, of furniture, of wall-paper, of win-

dow-curtains, of ceilings, of floors, things of which any knowledge is as useless to the reader as its acquisition by him is wearisome; descriptions of scenes and places which could not beget in him any conception without the aid of maps and colored drawings; descriptions of feeling, and states of feeling, and conflicts of feeling, and changes of feeling, and want of feeling, till he is so benumbed by the dull iteration and interminable monotony that to no feeling is he capable of responding. All this is done regardless of the fact that the action is made to stand still, and the thread of the story to be lost.

This author's imagination is, in some respects, strong. It can conceive clearly individualized and consistent characters in trying and dramatic juxtapositions and complications, and can see plainly the way to a logical conclusion. It is, however, the imagination of the detective, the lawyer, the speculator in science, not that of the poet. Like that of many another English novel-writer, it is more like a draught horse than it is like Pegasus. It is chiefly employed in laboriously exaggerating the commonplace. Within and partly concealed by this mass lies, generally, a good story. The plot is almost always praiseworthy. In filling it up the overloading, the disruptions, the violent separation of parts, and the consequent deformities are produced.

Perhaps one incentive to this kind of work is that the author, in common with some who hold places even higher than her own in public estimation, some

time ago discovered that a gossiping disposition might be turned to profit. Although women are currently mentioned as chiefly governed by this disposition, men in society, in the clubs, in the street, and in their books, demonstrate the fact that many of them, in this respect at least, are peers of the other sex. When writers of both sexes came to perceive that a story which might be told well in one volume could also be told in three, by crowding in at every practicable place the gossip talk of some old lady, some old gentleman, some young woman, some young man, some persons of either sex in the lower walks of life, and some equally gossip talk of the author himself about his own personages or other things, and that the three volumes would fetch in the market three times as much money as would the one, the character of English novels was, for a time at least, decided. Hence it has become some part of the business of almost every English writer of fiction to sell at a round price pages of such talk and such scandal as in the ordinary haunts of men and women may be had for nothing. And the nearer the written page resembles what is heard in these resorts, the more it is admired by a large class of readers.

In this kind of composition Mrs. Oliphant excels. "Phoebe Junior," the last of her works published, is a fair sample. The action almost wholly takes place among ill-bred and comparatively ignorant people, who are represented as dissenters. With this class the author especially likes to deal. You are inclined to

believe it is the class with which she is most familiar, and that her work is, in a great measure, that of a reporter rather than that of an inventor. All the scandal, the gossip, the petty envy and jealousy, the selfishness, the clumsy matrimonial intrigues, and, generally, the worst features of such a society are only too well depicted. Many transitory personages are introduced from time to time, who have nothing whatever to do with the action of the story, solely for the purpose, so far as can be discovered, of exhibiting these traits more completely and in greater variety. To what end? That the author may show how well she is acquainted with low-bred and vulgar people. It is hard to perceive any other reason, unless that she finds this kind of life interesting, and therefore believes that it will interest others.

That she, like too many writers of her class, should feel a natural sympathy with ignorance seems probable, when you observe that she complacently violates the plainest rules of English grammar; as, for instance:

“—— would have fancied it was them who were thus spying upon him.”

“It was him whom she thanked.”

“Are you sure this is her?”

“It would be her whom he would cover with disgrace.”

Many like errors may be noted in the twenty or thirty books which this author has written.

Aside from such defects as have been indicated,

Mrs. Oliphant's style is to be commended, because, in the main, it is simple and free from obscurity. It is not remarkable, however, for any special qualities of excellence, but keeps on its even and rather prosaic course somewhat above respectable mediocrity. In tone, her stories are wholesome and likewise respectable. She is too matter-of-fact to deal in sentimentality, or to indulge morbid fancies; too pure-minded to find pleasure in glossing impurity or varnishing crime. In this respect her works can have only a healthful influence.

Most readers would doubtless agree that "The Brownlows" is one of this author's best compositions. Mr. Brownlow is a man with an honest conscience, to whom a large sum of money, fifty thousand pounds, was left in trust, with a condition that if the person for whom the trust was created should not be discovered in the course of twenty-five years, all this money should become the property of Mr. Brownlow and his heirs in perpetuity. The person, who, if found, was to be benefited by this legacy, was a woman that, long before the death of the testator, had married a common soldier and disappeared. What name she had taken, whither she had gone, what had become of her, no one knew. Like the honorable man that he was, Brownlow made diligent search for this legatee, but without avail. Gradually he came to consider the fortune as his own, entered on a more expensive style of living, brought up his son and daughter in luxury, and was well enough

contented till within a twelvemonth of the time when the twenty-five years were to expire. Then he was alarmed by indications that the lost heir had appeared in the neighborhood. Should she ascertain her rights and now claim the inheritance with accrued interest, Mr. Brownlow would be utterly ruined and his children beggars. A terrible temptation entered into him and constantly agitated his bosom.

You would suppose that any reader with sufficient imagination to enjoy reading a novel, could easily conceive enough of the workings of this temptation, or could easily infer what they must be from the facts of the case, and from the actions and words of Mr. Brownlow. But our author is plainly of a different opinion. Besides, the opportunity for exposition and demonstration must not be lost.

“He left the breakfast-room, which was so bright, and wandered away into the library, a room which, busy man as he was, he occupied very seldom.”

Here follows a description of the room, of its size, of how the books looked, of what the view was like on which the windows opened, and then :

“He went in and sat down by the table, and looked round at all the shelves, and drew a blotting-book toward him mechanically. What did he want with it? He had no letters to write there,—nothing to do that belonged to that luxurious, leisurely place. If there was work to be done, it was at the office that he ought to do it. He had not the habit of writing here,—nor even of reading. The

handsome library had nothing to do with his life. This, perhaps, was why he established himself in it on the special day of which we speak. It seemed to him as if any moment his fine house might topple down about his ears like a house of cards. He had thought over it in the High street till he was sick and his head swam; perhaps some new light might fall on the subject if he was to think of it here. This was why he established himself at the table, making in his leisure a pretence to himself of having something to do. If he had been used to any sort of guile or dishonorable dealing, the chances are it would have been easier for him; but it is hard upon a man to change the habits of his life. John Brownlow had to maintain within himself a fight harder than that which a man ordinarily has to fight against temptation; for the fact was this was far, very far from being his case. He was not tempted to do wrong. It was the good impulse which in his mind had come to be the thing to be struggled against. What he wanted was to do what was right; but with all the steadiness of a virtuous resolution, he had set himself to struggle against his impulse and to do wrong."

You see the exposition is becoming misty and confused: The expositor is handling matters which she cannot grasp and which she does not understand; is, in fact, talking nonsense. She is bewildered by repeated efforts to get at and show the bottom of things; has, to speak plainly, run her investigations into the mud. What but temptation to do wrong can make a man of upright character and correct habits of thought and action struggle against his better impulses?

Not only Mr. Brownlow has thoughts and reflections and feelings, but Jack, his son, has reflections and feelings and thoughts, and his daughter, Sara, has feelings and thoughts and reflections. So has Powys, so has Mrs. Preston, so has Pamela. A large number of subordinate characters have them likewise. You are in a maze of expositions, one so like the other that you despair of ever finding your way out, unless you clear the whole dreary entanglement by a series of leaps. Plainly enough, in a work of this kind only so much language should be used as is necessary clearly and gracefully to present the complete idea of the story, its incidents and scenes, with appropriate adornments. Whatever is more than this clogs the movement, which is of the very essence of a good tale. In Mrs. Oliphant's books the movement is so obstructed by superfluity of words that, much of the time, it is altogether imperceptible.

Mr. May, the clergyman, to meet the necessities of Cotsdean, a poor parishioner from whom he had borrowed money which he cannot pay, has gradually yielded to temptation and forged the signature of Tozer, the grandfather of Phœbe Junior. The fraudulent act has been discovered, but Tozer only suspects Cotsdean. Phœbe has accidentally become aware of the whole truth, and, in order to protect the guilty and suffering man, has obtained possession of the forged paper and hidden it. The personages named and several others are present:

“ ‘Make her give up my bill,’ said Tozer: ‘I’ll hear nothing else till this is settled. My bill! It’s forgery; that’s what it is. Don’t speak to me about money. I’ll have him punished. I’ll have him rot in prison for it. I’ll not cheat the law—. You people as has influence with that girl make her give it to me. I can’t touch him without the bill.’

“Mr. May had been placed in a chair by the two young men who watched over him; but as Tozer spoke he got up, struggling wildly, almost tearing himself out of the coat by which they held him. ‘Let me go!’ he said. ‘Do you hear him? Rot in prison! with hard labor! It would kill me! And it used to be hanging! My God! my God! won’t you let me go?’

“Tozer stopped short; stopped by this passion which was greater than his own. He looked wonderingly at the livid face, the struggling figure, impressed in spite of himself. ‘He’s gone mad,’ he said. ‘Good Lord! But he’s got nothing to do with it. Can’t you take him away?’

“ ‘Grandpapa,’ said Phœbe in his ear, ‘here it is, your bill: it was *he* who did it—and it has driven him mad. Look! I give it up to you: and there he is—that is your work. Now do what you please—’

“Trembling, the old man took the paper out of her hand. He gazed, wondering, at the other, who, somehow—moved, in his excitement, by a sense that the decisive moment had come—stood still, too, his arm half pulled out of his coat, his face wild with dread and horror. For a moment they looked at each other in a common agony, neither the one nor the other clear enough to understand, but both feeling that some tremendous crisis had come upon them.

“ ‘He—done it!’ said Tozer, appalled and almost speechless. ‘*He* done it!’

"They all crowded round, a circle of scared faces. Phœbe alone stood calm. She was the only one who knew the whole, except the culprit, who understood nothing, with that mad confusion in his eyes. But he was overawed, too, and in his very madness recognized the crisis. He stood still, struggling no longer, with his eyes fixed upon the homely figure of the old butter-man, who stood trembling, thunderstruck, with that fatal piece of paper in his hand.

"Tozer had been mad for revenge two moments before—almost as wild as the guilty man before him—with a fierce desire to punish and make an example of the man who had wronged him. But this semi-madness was arrested by the sight of the other madman before him, and by the extraordinary shock of this revelation. It took all the strength out of him. He had not looked up to the clergyman as Cotsdean did, but he had looked up to the gentleman, his customer, as being upon an elevation very different from his own, altogether above and beyond him; and the sight of this superior being, thus humbled, mad-dened, gazing at him with wild terror and agony, more eloquent than any supplication, struck poor old Tozer to the very soul. 'God help us all!' he cried out with a broken, sobbing voice.

"He was but a vulgar old fellow, mean—it might be worldly—in his way; but the terrible mystery of human wickedness and guilt prostrated his common soul with as sharp an anguish of pity and shame as could have befallen the most heroic. It seized upon him, so that he could say or do nothing more, forcing hot and salt tears up into his old eyes, and shaking him all over with a tremor as of palsy. The scared faces appeared to come closer to Phœbe,

to whom these moments seemed like years. Had her trust been vain? Softly, but with an excitement beyond control, she touched him on the arm.

“‘That’s true,’ said Tozer, half crying; ‘something’s got to be done. We can’t all stand here forever, Phœbe. It’s him as has to be thought of. Show it to him, poor gentleman, if he ain’t past knowing, and burn it, and let us hear of it no more.’

“Solemnly, in the midst of them all, Phœbe held up the paper before the eyes of the guilty man. If he understood it or not, no one could tell. He did not move, but stared blankly at her and it. Then she held it over the lamp and let it blaze, and drop into harmless ashes in the midst of them all. Tozer dropped down into his elbow-chair, sniffing and sobbing. Mr. May stood quite still, with a look of utter dulness and stupidity coming over the face in which so much terror had been. If he understood what had passed, it was only in feeling, not in intelligence. He grew still and dull in the midst of that strange weakness which all the time was only half madness—a mixture of conscious excitement and anxiety with that which passes the boundaries of consciousness. For the moment he was stilled into stupid idiocy, and looked at them with vacant eyes.”

This is a fair example of Mrs. Oliphant’s best work, but you see in it her repetitions of thought, and the irrepressible disposition to substitute description for action. You perceive that the author herself, after exhausting her powers of concentrating and intensifying, feels that something of thought and emphasis, something of ardor and elevation, something of condensation and completeness are

wanting, and thus, with the purpose of supplying this conscious defect, she aggravates it by iteration and expansion. Instead of compensating the want of roundness, she attenuates the flatness. She lacks the grasp to seize a whole subject all at once, to place it at a proper height, and hold it there till rendered stable and enduring. As has been intimated, she can conceive with some clearness various characters well individualized ; can so arrange them that they come naturally enough into antagonistic, trying, dramatic contact with each other ; but she cannot bring these conceptions, combined so as to make parts of one integral whole, clearly and strongly into the light. One cause of these defects, probably, is that, like many others, she writes too much.

That proper care and study might have made this lady very superior as a writer to what she now is seems plain ; it is equally plain that now she must be classed with the business-like, not with the artistic, novelists.

AN OVER-RATED POET.

MR. TENNYSON enjoys a very wide reputation as a poet. He has written a great many verses, and these have a ready sale in the markets of the Old and the New World. It does not necessarily follow from this that Mr. Tennyson is a great poet. It is at least possible that some part of his reputation may be fictitious; that it may have been swollen by what in some sense may be considered natural causes, beyond his control.

In one of his famous criticisms, Lord Macaulay illustrates by a fable how a man without any active fault of his own may be made to pass for what he is not. According to the story a pious Brahmin was induced to buy an unclean and ugly cur for sacrifice by three confederate rogues, who came up one after another and with a confident air of respectability assured the holy man that the cur was a fine sheep. Just in this way are many persons made to affect a liking for metrical trash and to buy the volumes in which it is offered. "They are ashamed to dislike what men who speak as having authority declare to be good. The author and publisher are interested in crying up the book. Nobody has any strong interest

in crying it down. Those who are best fitted to guide the public opinion think it beneath them to expose mere nonsense, and comfort themselves by reflecting that such popularity cannot last. This contemptuous lenity has been carried too far." Had it suited their purpose as well, however, the three rogues might with as great solemnity have assured the Brahmin that a sheep was a sheep. Likewise a book which is lauded by the common consent of those who make opinions for people that cannot form their own, may contain excellent matter and be worthy of great praise. It does not follow, therefore, that even an unearned reputation may not be sustained by an author's works. But, in the main, such is not the case; and a writer conscious of real power would shrink in a kind of morbid terror from premature or excessive popularity. He feels instinctively that "it is for his honor as a gentleman, and, if he is really a man of talents, it will eventually be for his honor and interest as a writer, that his works should come before the public recommended by their own merits alone, and should be discussed with perfect freedom."

These fictitious reputations are hurtful in a way not mentioned with others by Lord Macaulay, and which even his comprehensive vision seems to have overlooked, namely, they fix a false standard. A youth, glowing with poetic impulses, pregnant with great ideas, craving the admiration and the love of a universe, sees some "contemptible poet" lauded,

esteemed, loved, while Shakspeare and Milton and those near to them are spoken of with conventional respect, and unread. He half believes that his instincts are all wrong; half doubts whether he even possesses poetic taste, since the verses of the favorite weary or repel him; tries to cultivate himself down to the height of the popular writer; is so bent by this effort that he cannot use his strength; does not even obtain the transient applause for which he has deformed himself; becomes a mere blight, a discontented failure. No mirror has revealed to him that he is a swan; more and more convinced that he is an ugly duck, he dies in that miserable belief. But for this wrong leading he might possibly have been a lasting honor to his country and an ornament to its literature.

That interested authors of puffing, or those who ignorantly echo them, should have any conscience in this matter is not to be expected. But competent critics must perforce see that they have here a weighty responsibility, and that "contemptuous lenity" may indeed be "carried too far."

As for Mr. Tennyson, it cannot be suspected that he has stooped to any bad means for fabricating a public opinion to his advantage. That he has profited by such fabrication cannot be questioned. The ranks of no profession are free from a large number of persons who, unable themselves to give any certain voice, eagerly serve as sounding-boards to augment and reflect the oracular utterances of those who

assume to speak by authority. Like politicians, they vote as the demagogue bids, and though they may have shouted and cast their ballots against the winning candidate, for him they are the first to throw up their hats. Perhaps there is even a larger proportion of such people among those who, with more or less constancy, write for the press on subjects of literature and art than can be found in any other connection. The real or supposed incompetency of the general public to deal critically with these things is a powerful incentive to charlatans. When a new candidate for literary or artistic honors appears, the leader speaks, and this echoing chorus responds. He may in strong language reject the solicitant, and the unhappy candidate hears the condemnation repeated with various intonations of invective along the ranks of sounding-boards. It may be that shortly another leader, with more potent voice, welcomes and lauds the same aspirant. Instantly the sounding-boards give forth their hollow and louder praises. These echoes have intelligence enough to perceive which, for the moment, is the popular side, and vanity enough to burn for distinction as its mouthpiece. By this condition of things, for which neither author nor publisher can be held responsible, many a writer's fame has been magnified infinitely beyond its just proportions; and by this condition of things probably no man's reputation has been more unduly swollen than Mr. Tennyson's.

It would doubtless be generally admitted by his

admirers that "The Idyls of the King" are the best poems in the volumes of Mr. Tennyson's works. But these he never conceived; he never brought them forth. They were antiquated, unknown to the public, unfamiliar to and almost forgotten by many of the learned when he fathered them. They were old-fashioned in dress, manner, and speech. In his eye, accustomed to sleekness, they appeared gaunt and inelegant. Their language was too simple and straightforward; their cadences sounded barbarous to an effeminate ear. As a woman who has no children, or a mother whose own offspring are weak or idiotic, craving a man-child, healthy, robust, spirited, even if he be also a little uncouth, gladly adopts such a one and labors anxiously to soften and refine, to clothe and to teach him, so Mr. Tennyson gratified a certain, as yet unsatisfied, want of his nature by adopting these aged orphans, of whose parents nothing was plainly known. He fattened them with sweetmeats, colored them with rouge and pearl-powder, taught them to speak many carefully-ordered modern words, clad them in courtly costumes, with long-tailed coats and widely-trailing gowns. With this his work began and ended, so far as these poems are concerned. These epics are in no manner his invention. Their ideas never took form and consistence from his brain. Even most of the thoughts that he has verbosely expressed, and many of which might pass for his own because not found in the original tales of the Round Table connected with

the particular story in which he makes use of them, may yet be discovered in other parts of this treasure-house from which he drew thoughts and ideas alike, selected, compiled, ornamented them; doing the work of a fastidious editor. Thus, in his version of the "*Morte D'Arthur*" may be found these lines, which, with others like them, have been much admired:

"Thus spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :

'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed with white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known :

But now delay not : take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere :
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.' "

One portion only of this is taken from the original legend of the "Morte D'Arthur," as it appears in the collection of Round Table stories most accessible to the general reader, namely : "Leave this mourning and weeping," said the King, "for wit thou well, if I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore : but my time hath past. Therefore," said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, "take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water-side ; and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest." The fact that King Arthur was smitten through the helm is also related by the same tale. The original of another portion of what is quoted above from Mr. Tennyson's work may be read in "The Sangreal," as follows :

"When King Arthur heard this he was greatly displeased, for he knew well that they might not gainsay their vows. 'Alas!' said he to Sir Gawain, 'you have nigh slain me with the vow and promise that ye have made, for ye have bereft me of the fairest fellowship that ever were seen together in any realm of the world ; for when they shall depart hence, I am sure that all shall never meet more in this world.' "

The source of still another portion may be found in "Arthur" :

“So they rode till they came to a lake, which was a fair water and broad. And in the midst of the lake Arthur was aware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in the hand. ‘Lo!’ said Merlin, ‘yonder is that sword that I spake of. It belongeth to the Lady of the Lake, and if she will, thou mayest take it; but if she will not, it will not be in thy power to take it.’ So Sir Arthur and Merlin alighted from their horses, and went into a boat; and when they came to the sword that the hand held Sir Arthur took it by the handle and took it to him, and the arm and the hand went under water.”

Thus the compilation may be traced throughout. The old Gothic Temple has been re-arranged, renovated, and adorned, if the use of such tautology as that in the sixth of the lines quoted above, and the frequent employment of words, merely for the sake of their sound, can be called adornment. To complete his re-arrangement and ornamentation the renovator pillaged other noble old edifices of the same class, taking a column from one, a capital from another, an arch from a third. Then he framed a porch and set it before the temple. And what a porch! It is all his own. No man will dispute for the honor of its building. Rashly did Mr. Tennyson place this prologue. It brings into sharp contrast the invention of the real author of the “Morte D’Arthur,” and the almost entire want of any such quality in the poet laureate. The one work is symmetrical, noble, lofty; the other flat, poor, unshapely. They stand on levels immeasurably apart. Only

when Mr. Tennyson is supported by a structure of this kind, ready built, does he appear to move at the altitude of grandeur. He mounts such edifices as the fresco-painter or the mosaic-maker climbs the scaffolding in the dome of a cathedral, and for much the same purpose.

The quotation given above illustrates also something else, namely, Mr. Tennyson's want of any nice sense of dramatic fitness, and his ability to belittle what is great, confuse what is simple, and bring down what is sublime. Compare, for example, the manner in which he causes the story of how Arthur came into possession of Excalibur to be told, with the way in which it was related by its real author. It is against all likelihood and propriety that a man, smitten through the helm, and just recovered from a long swoon, feeling moreover that "without help he cannot last till morn," should waste his precious time in recalling to another, and especially to one who already knew all about it—"for thou rememberest how"—the way he got that famous sword. The vitally pressing question was, what at the instant to do with it. And yet, in the laureate's version, King Arthur not only tells how he came by the weapon, but is quite at leisure also to interject expletives—"mystic, wonderful." To be sure they fill out Mr. Tennyson's verse for him, after a fashion:

"These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowel's tire,

While expletives their feeble aid do join,
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line."

But Arthur was not then thinking of the "dresser up of lost epics," or of his measures. Even if the wounded King could then properly have told this story, he could not properly have used these adjectives. They weaken and degrade the whole passage. From any point of view they are entirely out of character.

The distinction between a framer of verses and the maker of a poem is very wide. "What distinguishes the artist from the amateur," says Goethe, "is *architectoniké* in the highest sense; that power of execution which creates, forms, and constitutes; not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the richness of imagery, not the abundance of illustration." The poem is a complete conception, and, like the poet, it "is born, not fabricated." Its very essence is idea. It does not appear as thought, but as the object and suggester of thought. The distinguishing mark of a poet is power of invention, the ability to conceive, develop, and produce grand, original, perfectly formed ideas. "A poet is a maker," says Dryden, "as the word signifies, and who cannot make, that is, invent, hath his name for nothing." It is in the creative faculty that Mr. Tennyson is most notably deficient. Just in proportion as a man possesses this faculty, everything else being equal, is he a great or a small maker, that is a poet. Carefully examine any or all of the laureate's most popular pieces, Locksley Hall, Enoch Arden, the Princess, the May Queen, or any

others. You will perceive, instead of invention, combination and construction of a kind not overingenious; literary commonplaces instead of originally produced materials.

To assert that Mr. Tennyson has no invention would be to say an untruth; to point out the fact that his invention is feeble and comparatively fruitless is only to indicate what every critical reader may discover for himself. Musically-ordered words, the expression of vague and delicate feeling more or less vague, the dim representation by phrases of undefined cravings which may disturb a sensitive soul, all these are evidences of poetic instincts and tastes, but they do not constitute a poem or prove a poet. They might well be parts of a complete whole, as colors might be parts of a picture. In refined, delicate, attenuated expression, or rather indication, of indistinct, somewhat melancholy, and very sentimental longings, Mr. Tennyson is at his best. He can make pretty figures of speech, sometimes a striking simile, occasionally a bold metaphor. But so could Spotted-Tail or Red Cloud. Yet, were either of these heroes to speak as many words as the laureate has written, the whole combined would not constitute a poem. He can paint word-pictures very exquisitely, though not very compactly; but they are made too much after the fashion of Chinese paintings on rice-paper, without distinct perspectives and such logical connection as to give them a plain, strong, and coherent meaning. Look, for instance,

at "The Islet," and see to what a lame and impotent conclusion he can come, or, rather, the want of conclusion, the evaporation and diffusion of thought and idea with which many of his pieces terminate. For examples of vague feeling vaguely expressed, read "Break, break, break," or "Tears, idle tears," or "The Bugle Song." He appears never to be filled with welling and pent-up emotions, never bursts forth in passionate utterances, never exhibits more than the faintest glow of enthusiasm. He seems to be troubled with a chronic sense of emptiness, craves he knows not exactly what, conceives of the most irrepressible of things as absorbing their force and substance, or at any rate receiving it from without, not as resistlessly bursting forth from their confines. Even torrents are sucked from hills and dashed downward :

"and right and left
Sucked from the dark heart of the long hills roll
The torrents, dash'd to the vale."

He is generally passive, rarely active ; his function is to take in, not to give out. He is like the moon more than like the sun ; he receives and reflects, and if spoken of figuratively should grammatically be mentioned as she. His most contented mood is a state of idle voluptuousness, such as is indicated in "The Lotos-Eaters." He makes his nearest approach to a manifestation of genuine passion and enthusiasm when he is vindicating natural as against conventional nobility, and real as against fictitious worth.

For illustrations see "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," "Locksley Hall," and "Aylmer's Field." In this respect he reveals instincts truly poetic, but never overwhelmingly forcible. Generally, the words of passion which he uses on what he judges to be fit occasions, are cold; they do not even glow; the fire is all out of them. Rarely, indeed, you may perceive some warmth, as in "Fatima," in some portions of "A Dream of Fair Women," and in "Ænone." But these seem to be spasmodic utterances, the fitful elevation of a pale and feeble flame. It does not appear, however, that ardent passion in Mr. Tennyson is chilled by the coldness of pure and profound intellect. If the reader carefully analyzes his somewhat voluminous writings, he will find them as barren of strong and compressed thought as of clearly-defined idea. Examine the following song, taken at random from his collected works :

"Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

"Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river;
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

"But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
Forever and forever.

“A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.”

Or these, a fair sample of nine stanzas addressed
“To ——, after reading a *Life and Letters*.” A
line from Shakspeare’s epitaph is the text and a
poet the subject :

“Ah shameless ! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its worth ;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon’d statesman he, nor king.

“He gave the people of his best :
His worst he kept, his best he gave,
My Shakspeare’s curse on clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest.”

This was doubtless evolved from the laureate’s
inner consciousness, and, in effect, contains his own
confession. If, indeed, he has only given the people
of his best, and truly kept back his worst, he deserves
for such consideration a reward equal in value to his
reputation as a poet. Let any discriminating reader
who, pleased by the melody of carefully-framed
verses, has taken it for granted that the sense must
be as delicate and pleasing, and as much in quantity
as the sound, judiciously eliminate useless words from
Mr. Tennyson’s writings, and then condense the
significance of what remains, after the manner of
whatever figure he may choose, either by sifting for

the kernels or by evaporating the dilution, and he will probably be astonished at the smallness and commonplace quality of the residuum. In the main this author's versification is uncommonly correct. Its greatest defects are that it shows marks of the artificer's hammer, and that by the very use of superfluous words its pauses and cadences are made too regular and monotonous. This, however, is but artisan's work, and corresponds to a kind of labor necessary to make any artistic creation sensible. By eminent poets and critics alike it has been esteemed at best one of the lower parts of the poetic art. "The highest thoughts," writes Mr. Ruskin, "are those which are least dependent on language, and the dignity of any composition, and the praise to which it is entitled, are in exact proportion to its independency of language or expression." "If the poetry of Milton be examined," says Dr. Johnson, "with regard to the pauses and flow of his verses into each other, it will appear that he has performed all that our language would admit; and the comparison of his numbers with those who have cultivated the same manner of writing, will show that he excelled as much in the lower as the higher parts of his art, and that his skill in harmony was not less than his invention or his learning." In this labor, however, ample scope is given for the play of elegant fancy and the liveliest action of a decorative imagination. Both of these qualities the laureate possesses in a high degree; and he often uses them with admirable

effect in descriptions of natural scenery, as well as in constructing figures of speech.

How many dramas or dramatic poems Mr. Tennyson has kept back is not known ; only recently, however, has he given one to the people. And because this has been given, it is but fair to infer that the author esteems it of his best, and is willing to have his qualities as a dramatic poet judged by it. Before the publication of this last work he had occasionally dealt with subjects essentially dramatic, but not in such a way that a deduction, as to his dramatic powers, drawn from a general examination of his verses, could be altered thereby. Many of his admirers consider "*St. Simeon Stylites*" to be one of his best and strongest compositions. It begins well, quite in the style of a dramatic monologue, a style which the subject demands. But the writer could not sustain this manner, could not bring into bold relief the martyr's passion, could not compress and intensify his language so that single words, pertinent and necessary to the phrase, should, as it were, reflect vistas in his past life, and, like magic mirrors, reveal the history of his lengthy penance. Therefore the author falls out of the dramatic into the narrative style, and makes *St. Simeon* relate to the Almighty in detail all the minute facts which the writer wished him to publish to his audience. It is difficult for the laureate to express clearly and forcibly an unmixed feeling ; impossible for him to give voice and action to the complex passions, the contending emo-

tions, the mighty transports which make up tragedy. At least such must have been the conclusion to which an examination of this author's performances would have led an investigator before the appearance of "Queen Mary." He could put together the notes of a simple ballad, a kind of folk-song; he could not compose an opera. He is not full enough; has not the compass or the strength even to furnish varying passions and affections that together shall speak through all the tones of any one diapason; much less has he the power to generate from a nature rich in the germs of all or many characters, ideal personages in whom these affections and passions may have lodgment. Such a nature he does not possess. He is a harp to be played on by zephyrs, rather than the potential maker of all the instruments in a whole orchestra, and the educer therefrom of universal harmonies.

It only remains to be seen whether Mr. Tennyson's drama, "Queen Mary," should alter our estimate of his poetic capacities and powers. It may be seen at a glance that this composition is made after the fashion of plays; that is to say, it is divided into acts, which are subdivided into scenes; the text is written in the form of dialogue, and in blank verse. In these respects it has all the essentials of a drama. But a more intimate search brings to light no dramatic spirit, no soul combining, informing, directing to one common end all the members of the body. It is a work of shreds and patches, rather than a

firmly-woven web from which no thread can be drawn without marring the whole texture. It lacks that close connection and interdependence of parts which is necessary to the oneness of every creation and especially requisite in a drama. The personages are like automata made to utter such bits of history as, spoken in due order, shall tell an intelligible story. They resemble the wooden men, result of an unsuccessful effort of the gods to make beings that should intelligently speak and adore them, as described in the Quiché history of the creation. "They moved about perfectly well, it is true; but still the heart and the intelligence were wanting. They were but an essay, an attempt at men; they had neither blood, nor substance, nor moisture, nor fat." Queen Mary is the only person who manifests any hearty emotion, and this she does very sparingly. In the third act she has a soliloquy, by far the best passage in the book, and almost the only one that shows any dramatic vigor or fire:

"He hath awaked! he hath awaked!

He stirs within the darkness!

Oh, Philip, husband! now thy love to mine

Will cling more close, and those bleak manners thaw,

That make me shamed and tongue-tied in my love.

The second Prince of Peace—

The great unborn defender of the Faith,

Who will avenge me of mine enemies—

He comes, and my star rises.

The stormy Wyatts and Northumberlands,

The proud ambitions of Elizabeth,
And all her fieriest partisans—are pale
Before my star !
The light of this new learning wanes and dies :
The ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius fade
Into the deathless hell which is their doom
Before my star !
His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to Ind !
His sword shall hew the heretic peoples down ;
His faith shall clothe the world that will be his,
Like universal air and sunshine ! Open,
Ye everlasting gates ! The King is here !—
My star, my son !”

This speech is entirely different from anything else in the volume, and vastly excels all the rest in spirit, elevation, and strength. It is like a block of porphyry in a structure of freestone. How is the great superiority of this single passage to be explained ? Probably in this wise : The legate, Cardinal Pole, has just terminated his first interview with the Queen after his arrival in England. One incident of that interview is thus mentioned by Hume : “The Queen’s extreme desire of having issue had made her fondly give credit to any appearance of pregnancy ; and when the legate was introduced to her, she fancied that she felt the embryo stir in her womb. Her flatterers compared the motion of the infant to that of John the Baptist, who leaped in his mother’s belly at the salutation of the Virgin. Despatches were immediately sent to inform foreign courts of this

event; orders were issued to give public thanks; great rejoicings were made; the family of the young prince was already settled, for the Catholics held themselves assured that the child was to be a male; and Bonner, Bishop of London, made public prayers be said, that heaven would please to render him beautiful, vigorous, and witty." This hint was sufficient for the laureate, who appears to be always ready to "suck" inspiration from any source. Like the mother of John the Baptist, Queen Mary should foretell; and he set himself to absorb the spirit of Elizabeth's prophecy, of the Virgin Mary's song, and of different predictions concerning Christ. When to the utmost of his capacity he had filled himself with this spirit, and with the essence of the language in which it took form, he wrote this monologue. Such a method would be quite in keeping with his manner of composing the "Idyls of the King" and some other things. It is not spoken of here as a matter for censure, but as a matter of explanation. The rest of the play he had to draw from narrative prose, and faithfully enough did he copy the original. Strictly speaking it has no dramatic intrigue, at any rate none whatever invented by the author; nor has it, consequently, any dramatic action. It possesses no quality of a drama except the external form. There is an attempt at effective contrast when two cronies are made to babble irrelevantly in the dialect of their county while the burning of Cranmer is supposed to go on. This is feeble, but it is the

strongest dramatic juxtaposition in the volume. It might be said that many superfluous personages appear, did not the absence of any intrigue make it impossible to determine who is not superfluous. It might also be alleged that the work is not artistically constructed, is not well defined and fairly proportioned, did not the want of any plan render it impracticable to decide what are its shape and proportions.

In this compilation the laureate has used no invention worthy of notice; at most he has displayed very inferior talents for construction. Even the language falls far below his usual level in poetic qualities. Only one little song is in his better style, and is very sweet. It shadows forth a simple and melancholy feeling. Queen Mary sings it:

“ Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!
Beauty passes like a breath, and love is lost in loathing:
Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the world is
nothing—

Low, lute, low!

“ Love will hover round the flowers when they first awaken;
Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be overtaken;
Low, my lute! Oh low, my lute! we fade and are forsaken—

Low, dear lute, low!”

In such work as that contained in this volume he has shown himself to be not an artist, but an artisan. Generally speaking, his artistic powers rarely trans-

cend the limits of an embellisher's occupation. Even in this his judgment is likely enough to err; he is too lavish with his ornamentation, and too nearly overspreads the whole surface. He is not an architect, but a decorator. Yet when he has adorned with sufficient profusion what another man has built, it may pass for his own edifice; when he has embellished a commonplace cottage of his own construction, it may pass for a fairy palace. Measured by the standard of great poets he lacks their essential qualities. It would appear, therefore, that even in these days of speculation, no man has received so great an income from the use of so small a capital as has Mr. Alfred Tennyson.

THE POET OF THE SIERRAS.

MR. JOAQUIN MILLER's new poem, entitled "The Ship in the Desert," is the third work of the kind made public by this author; the first having attracted much attention, and received uncommon praise, several years ago. Such merits as were then magnified by a kind of morning halo, and were lauded not only for what they were, but for what they promised to become; and such defects as were then kindly explained away as rather superficial than radical, more apparent than real, obscurities or refractions produced by the mists of dawn, must now alike be judged in the full light of clear day, stripped of all excuses, seen as they are, and measured by an equitable standard.

A reader of the new volume, who opens it with agreeable expectations, excited by its predecessors, must feel a keen disappointment. The first strong impression which he receives, is that its author has made no observable progress; that his diction has not been enriched; that his idea of form has not grown more definite; that his sensibility to harmonies and discords has not increased. He perceives no poetic or artistic development. He notes a want

of clearness and earnestness of purpose ; is tantalized by a very annoying and prolonged succession of false beginnings, a provoking number of boyish feints ; and when, at length, the career is actually commenced, it is followed with no steadiness of pace, but is run by fits and starts. You look for unity, and you find fragments, connected, to be sure, but by discrepant matter. You expect to feel an ever-present and dominating design ; you are distracted by incongruous whims, turned hither and thither by divers aims, and confused by repetitions. You hope to be borne on a constantly-swelling and ever-hastening current ; you are carried round and round in idle eddies. You see that the author has not put his talent out at usury. He brings it time and again without any increase. He continues to offer works of art from which art is, in a great measure, absent. A little thought, certainly a little reading, might have taught him “ that images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only so far as they are modified by a predominant passion, or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion—when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet’s own spirit,

‘ Which shoots its being through earth, sea, and air.’ ”

To multiply images seems to be Mr. Miller’s chief intention, without reference to harmony or propor-

tion, without much regard either for nature or probability. He is ignorant of, or indifferent to, the manifestation of the truth that "good sense is the body of poetic genius, fancy its drapery, motion its life, and imagination the soul, that is everywhere and in each, and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole." Even when dealing with swift physical movement his poem has little or no motion; of common sense it is barren; of fancy, scant; and what has already been said sufficiently shows that it lacks a fusing, unifying, moulding imagination.

He seems to be conscious, at any rate in some small degree, of the inadequacy of motive expressed in his work, the lack of logical connection, the very dark obscurity of the argument, and flippantly intimates that these are matters with which he will not trouble himself.

"And why did these same sunburnt men
Let Morgan gain the plain, and then
Pursue him to the utter sea?
You ask me here impatiently,
And I as pertly must reply:
My task is but to tell a tale;
To give a wide sail to the gale;
To paint the boundless plain, the sky;
To rhyme, nor give a reason why."

Logic is as necessary in poetry as in law. "No man was ever yet a great poet without being at the same time a profound philosopher," and a subtle

logician. In rhyme without reason, however, the promptings of Mr. Miller's intellectual nature find full play. He avows it, and his poem proves it. Possibly, through indolence, he does himself great injustice; possibly he lacks the most important qualities, the fundamental elements of a great poet. One example of the confusion which results from the want of any definite plan and clear logical construction in his poem, may be found in the fourth chapter; in the first part of which he indicates a beautiful girl, as she is rowed up the river Missouri, much against her will:

“ And who of all the world was she?
A bride, or not a bride? A thing
To love? A prison'd bird to sing?
You shall not know. That shall not be
Brought from the future's great profound
This side the happy hunting ground.

“ I only saw her, heard the sound
Of murky waters gurgling round
In counter currents from the shore,
But heard the long, strong stroke of oar
Against the waters gray and vast.
I only saw her as she pass'd—”

Through two or more pages he goes on repeating in slightly different words the same specifications of this girl's appearance, especially lauding her eyes and mouth; telling how he loved her

“Above the hundred seven hills
Of dead and risen old new Rome;”

discussing the question whether she loved him, and saying again and again that “you shall not know her;” and then he finishes the chapter:

“I dared not dream she loved me. Nay,
Her love was proud; and pride is loth
To look with favor, own it fond
Of one the world loves not to-day—
No matter if she loved or no,
God knows I loved enough for both,
And knew her as you shall not know
Till you have known sweet death, and you
Have crossed the dark; gone over to
The great majority beyond.”

Now, all the time that he is loving this girl so devotedly in Rome, and declaring that he will not tell you who she is, black men are rowing the same girl up the Missouri river. Should you ask how all this is to be reconciled or explained, he would tell you that it is his business “to rhyme, nor give a reason why.” Thus, too, he begins the thirty-eighth chapter of his work with these lines:

“I do recall some sad days spent
By borders of the Orient;”

and goes on through this and the succeeding chapter to tell, with his customary repetitions, of various things which he saw in the East. Nothing in these

two chapters has the remotest relation to anything else in his poem. As much matter from *Paradise Lost*, or from the *History of John Gilpin's Ride*, interpolated in the same place would have been no more incongruous. After this excursion across the Atlantic and the greater part of Europe, he resumes the thread of his story and finishes it. A similar want of logical perception, or of its use, is often shown by Mr. Miller's similes :

“ Away upon the sandy seas,
The gleaming, burning, boundless plain,
How solemn-like, how still, as when
The mighty-minded Genoese
Drew three tall ships and led his men
From land they might not meet again.”

The poem is as deficient in depth and energy as it is in continuity and motion of thought ; and a great authority has said that without such depth and energy other poetic characteristics “ could scarce exist in a high degree, and (even if this were possible) would give promises only of transitory flashes and a meteoric power.” Such flashes and such meteoric power may be seen in Mr. Miller's work, together with much that is weak, childish, and commonplace. For specimens of the vain repetitions, the puerilities, and the lame conclusions with which the book abounds, read the concluding lines :

“ This isle is all their own. No more
The flight by day, the watch by night.

Dark Ina twines about the door
The scarlet blooms, the blossoms white,
And winds red berries in her hair,
And never knows the name of care.

“She has a thousand birds; they blow
In rainbow clouds, in clouds of snow;
The birds take berries from her hand;
They come and go at her command.

“She has a thousand pretty birds,
That sing her summer songs all day;
Small black-hoofed antelope in herds,
And squirrels bushy-tailed and gray,
With round and sparkling eyes of pink,
And cunning-faced as you can think.

“She has a thousand busy birds;
And is she happy in her isle,
With all her feathered friends and herds?
For when has Morgan seen her smile?

“She has a thousand cunning birds,
They would build nestings in her hair;
She has brown antelope in herds;
She never knows the name of care;
Why then is she not happy there?

“All patiently she bears her part;
She has a thousand birdlings there,
These birds they would build in her hair;
But not one bird builds in her heart.

“She has a thousand birds; yet she
Would give ten thousand cheerfully,

All bright of plume and loud of tongue,
And sweet as ever trilled or sung,
For one small fluttered bird to come
And sit within her heart, though dumb.

“She has a thousand birds; yet one
Is lost, and lo! she is undone.
She sighs sometimes. She looks away,
And yet she does not weep or say.

“She has a thousand birds. The skies
Are fashioned for her paradise;
A very queen of fairy land,
With all earth’s fruitage at command,
And yet she does not lift her eyes.
She sits upon the water’s brink
As mournful soul’d as you can think.

“She has a thousand birds; and yet
She will look downward, nor forget
The fluttered white-winged turtle-dove,
The changeful-throated birdling, love,
That came, that sang through tropic trees,
Then flew for aye across the seas.

“The waters kiss her feet; above
Her head the trees are blossoming,
And fragrant with eternal spring.
Her birds, her antelope are there,
Her birds they would build in her hair:
She only waits her birdling, love.
She turns, she looks along the plain,
Imploring love to come again.”

So the poem ends. Why Morgan fled, why Vasques pursued, why Ina pined, you are not told; and if you ask, the author will "pertly" answer that his "task" is "to rhyme, nor give the reason why." Of this flight and pursuit, which are all that can in any way and by any stretch of courtesy be called a plot, you get no idea more definite and clear than is your knowledge of their cause. If you try to guess at the relation of his personages, he gives you no aid, but, on the contrary, does the most he can to render you uncertain and your conjectures vague. It is his business to rhyme, not to reason.

This author does more than promise "transitory flashes and meteoric power;" he exhibits both. In his first work he gave pledges that he might become a real, even a great poet. That he has disappointed so many expectations still seems to have been his own fault. He appears to have failed of great excellence through a lack of sincerity, industry, and an inflexible purpose. He is therefore so much the more to be censured. It would be unjust to blame a man for not exceeding his powers. He who trifles with them, and with those whose good opinion he courts, can hardly be too severely condemned. To satisfy the necessities of his rhyme, Mr. Miller often resorts to the readiest makeshifts, without reference to any consistent meaning, occasionally using for this purpose some familiar collocation of words that is utterly inapt, as, for instance, at the end of the following stanza:

“O dark-eyed Ina! All the years
Brought her but solitude and tears.
Lo! ever looking out, she stood
Adown the wave, adown the wood,
Adown the strong stream to the south,
Sad-faced and sorrowful. Her mouth
Pushed out so pitiful. Her eyes
Fill'd full of sorrow and surprise.”

Why surprise? She saw nothing but the unchanging waste of wood and water; she gazed on it in a sad reverie without perceiving anything, in fact. What surprised her? Sometimes, too, if he perceives any significance in the phrases used to make up his verse and give the proper sound at the end, he completely fails to make such significance evident, as in the last line of the following quotation:

“A right foot rested on the dead,
A black hand reached and clutched a beard,
Then neither prayed, nor dreamed of hope—
A fierce face reach'd, a fierce face peer'd—
No bat went whirling overhead,
No star fell out of Ethiope.”

Why should a star fall out of Ethiope? That country was more than thrée thousand miles away from the scene described. If a star must fall on the occasion, it would most probably and most poetically have been one that could see what was going on there in the American desert.

It is hardly worth while to mention minor defects in this work, some imperfect lines, some weak rhymes, some rough versification, some improper use of words. These are matters which in a nearly perfect poem should receive due attention ; but in this composition the deficiencies are so radical that no degree of finish, no amount of decoration, no handiwork of fancy could hide them. It does not reach such a point of excellence in form and substance as to make the reader care much for the more technical faults. And yet the book holds detached passages that are strong and truly poetic, though crude. Some of them may be seen in the quotations below, brought together from different parts of the volume. Examine them and you can but lament that Mr. Miller should not more earnestly cultivate his powers :

“ What strong uncommon men were these,
These settlers hewing to the seas !
Great horny-handed men and tan ;
Men blown from any border land ;
Men desperate and red of hand,
And men in love and men in debt,
And men who lived but to forget,
And men whose very hearts had died,
Who only sought these woods to hide
Their wretchedness, held in the van ;
Yet every man among them stood
Alone, along that sounding wood,
And every man somehow a man.

“ A race of unnamed giants these,
That moved like gods among the trees,
So stern, so stubborn-browed, and slow,
With strength of black-maned buffalo ;
And each man notable and all,
A kingly and unconscious Saul,
A sort of sullen Hercules.”

“ They tossed the forest like a toy,
That great forgotten race of men,
The boldest band that yet has been
Together since the siege of Troy.”

“ And they descended and did roam
Through level'd distances set round
By room. They saw the Silences
Move by and beckon ; saw the forms,
The very heads of burly storms,
And heard them talk like sounding seas,
On unnamed heights, bleak-blown, and brown,
And torn like battlements of Mars,
They saw the darknesses come down,
Like curtains loosen'd from the dome
Of God's cathedral, built of stars.”

“ They climbed so high it seem'd eftsoon
That they must face the falling moon,
That like some flame-lit ruin lay
Thrown down before their weary way.”

“ Two sullen bullocks led the line,
Their great eyes shining bright like wine ;

Two sullen captive kings were they ;
That had in time held herds at bay,
And even now they crushed the sod
With stolid sense of majesty,
And stately stepp'd and stately trod,
As if 'twas something still to be
Kings even in captivity."

"The savage, warlike day bent low,
As reapers bend in gathering grain,
As archer bending bends yew bow,
And flushed and fretted as in pain.
Then down his shoulder slid his shield,
So huge, so awful, so blood-red
And batter'd as from battle-field :
It settled, sunk to his left hand,
Sunk down and down, it touch'd the sand,
Then day along the land lay dead,
Without one candle at his head."



THE PHILOSOPHER OF CRIME.

ATTENTION has of late been particularly drawn to the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne by Mr. G. P. Lathrop's book, "A Study of Hawthorne." The author brings forward the results of much thought upon the subject of his meditations, exhibits good, though rather laborious, writing and considerable analytic power. His work is very carefully and, doubtless, conscientiously done; and such work must always have a certain value and interest. But, as indicated by his own assertion, Mr. Lathrop was unfitted to make an impartial study of his author. "I do not," says he, "enter upon this attempt as a mere literary performance, but have been assisted in it by an inward impulse, a consciousness of sympathy with the subject, which I may perhaps consider a sort of inspiration. My guide has been intuition, confirmed and seldom confuted by research." A perfectly impartial verdict or decree would hardly be expected from a juryman or a judge who should seek confirmation of his intuitions in the evidence given during the trial of a cause. Mr. Lathrop seems to have had two eminent intuitions: one to the effect that Hawthorne was made up of the better parts of

Milton and Bunyan; the other that the nobler qualities of Shakspeare and Goethe were combined in him :

“ Altogether, if one could compound Bunyan and Milton, combine the realistic imagination of the one with the other's passion for ideas, pour the ebullient undulating prose style of the poet into the veins of the allegorist's firm, leather-jerkined English, and make a modern man and author of the whole, the result would not be alien to Hawthorne.”

“ These great abilities, subsisting with a temper so modest and unaffected, and never unhumanized by the abstract enthusiasm for art, place him on a plane between Shakspeare and Goethe. With less erudition than Goethe, but also less of the freezing pride of art, he is infinitely more humane, sympathetic, holy. His creations are statuesquely moulded like Goethe's, but they have the same quick music of heart-throbs that Shakspeare's have.”

In one respect only the intellectual power of Hawthorne seems to have been unrestrained by any definable limits. His vocabulary appears boundless. His thoughts, thoroughly elaborated, are presented to the reader in their utmost development; exquisitely shaped, cleanly cut, sharply defined, wanting nothing. A reader of very quick intelligence may, indeed, find this perfectness of expression somewhat wearisome. He must passively receive the exuberant and wholly matured products of his author, foregoing the charm of that kind of co-operation which goes forward when the reader's reason and imagination are called upon in some way to consummate the idea

begotten in his mind by the writer's words. Slower apprehensions and less fruitful fancies, however, obtain only satisfaction from Hawthorne's fulness of utterance. In reading all his writings, you will perceive not more than one or two words that appear like pets, such, for instance, as "immitigable;" and this rather from its rarity in other places than from its frequency here. From this mastery of words, this exquisite taste in diction, joined with a keen sense of euphony and of dulcet rhythm, comes no small part of this author's great reputation. His thoughts, his invention, all the operations of his mind, are confined within certain limits that can be indicated with sufficient exactness. One of these boundaries lies outside of the ordinary range of actual and visible nature. The other is within the sphere of reality, but only comprises so much of this as may work, or, as an artist would say, compose harmoniously with what he takes from beyond. Or perhaps it would be more exact to allege that he protracts the actual into the unreal so skilfully that no man can discern where was the bourn between the two. Thus he produces effects analogous to caricature. Seizing upon some salient trait of character, he exaggerates it till it becomes the one feature on which the eye rests, and is an index of the whole man. He takes care so to mould or modify the rest of the figure as to avoid even a suggestion of monstrosity, and to preserve so much of natural and logical relation between the parts that the individuality and consistency

of the personage so far as indicated shall remain complete. Generally the most exaggerated feature is the one most distinguished for ugliness, visible or invisible to common perceptions. With more than a portrait-painter's eye he discriminates this taint, which no one even suspected till it was brought into view by his firm, delicate, hyperbolic brush. When the figure is completed, it is so conventionally consistent as a whole that you are willing to accept it as the genuine man, and to reject the other, which has hitherto passed current, as a counterfeit. In working up this conventional consistency between what was before manifest and what the painter has added, idealizing the original after his fashion, Hawthorne shows his greatest artistic skill. Judging from this alone you would say he was a consummate artist. This part of his work certainly has a kind of resemblance to that of Bunyan; so it has to that of Swift and De Foe.

It may well be, however, that some parts of a statue or of a sculptured group may show the results of exquisite manipulation, while the whole thing may present unshapeliness and incongruities. Whether this author's productions, considered in their entirety, are master-works of art will be discussed further on. Plainly enough, a moral rather than an artistic standard was foremost in his mind. By this foremost standard the plans of his personages were laid out; from it as a base he measured all the degrees of divergence while calculating the effect of following

the line of each ; by it he determined the fate of all his characters. For characters he composed, men and women of a semi-transparent kind, whose true qualities are visible, however degraded, perverted, or deformed ; who appear as they are, not as they would seem to be. Extending beyond what should be fleshly limits, their essences form a sort of spiritual atmosphere about them which is but a part, a continuation, of themselves ; something as unsubstantial yet as visible as a penumbra, and holding its relation to the thicker shadows which they are. For, in a way, the denser portions of them are like shades. By making their more material forms appear on the debatable ground between substance and shadow, the real is more easily and gradually tempered to the unreal, and an appearance of homogeneity throughout the whole being is effected.

But do not think that these characters were made simply for the artistic pleasure of creating. Impracticable as some of them may seem, they were designed for a practical end. They are mirrors. Do you not see yourself, or some part of yourself, in some one or more of them ? Among the exaggerated features which characterize each, can you not discern your own besetting sin drawn out, perhaps magnified ? Do you not observe, as never before, how loathsome is hypocrisy, for instance ? Can you not now perceive, no matter what your blindness hitherto, how inevitably any divergence from the moral law leads to misery and destruction ? how the first step in a

wrong way is fatally followed by a second and a third, and so on till there is no turning? Are you not convinced that indulgence in devilish passions will make you a kind of devil? make you feel like one, act like one, look like one? and that in the end you will be disappointed, defeated, punished like one? And lest so much of the lesson be not effective enough, look how you shall be laughed at in your calamity, and mocked when your fear cometh. Behold Judge Pyncheon, for example. Is he not a worthy man? Does he not sit in honorable places? Has he not been blessed with wealth and comforts and the respect of his kind? Does he not give alms to beggars and larger donations to fashionable charities? Is he not condescending to inferiors, courteous to equals, reverential to superiors? Has not his smile shone like a noonday sun along the streets or glowed like a household fire in the drawing-rooms of his private acquaintance? Is it not a fact that "neither clergyman nor legal critic, nor inscriber of tombstones, nor historian of general or local politics, would venture a word against this eminent person's sincerity as a Christian, or respectability as a man, or integrity as a judge, or courage and faithfulness as the often-tried representative of his political party?" But we know him better than do his townsmen. We have seen beneath that heavy and reputable-looking mask of flesh. We have some knowledge of his inmost thoughts, more than we shall tell, a part of which we shall insinuate, not

over clearly though, so that we may keep something enigmatical always before you. Where is the Judge now? Within a dingy, darkening room in yonder house with the seven gables. Why does he stay there so long? The time appointed for that most important meeting is at hand. The crowning of his ambition depends upon his presence there. His friends are waiting. Why does he not come out? Why does he sit hour after hour in the huge arm-chair with his watch in his hand? Why gazes he so steadily in the direction of its dial, though the darkness long since made it invisible? Ah! all this you shall know, but rather dimly, by and by. Wait till we shall have laughed at him and mocked him and jeered at him and reviled him through a whole long chapter of some eighteen octavo pages. There is mystery about his delay, at least such mystery as an author can make by exciting and not gratifying your curiosity. But while your curiosity is active you will be attentive; and while you are attentive we will preach to you, in our own way, however. To be sure our way is somewhat like that of a man whose enemy is at last in his power, and who can now safely wag his tongue against him. But the sermon is good for all that, though Judge Pyncheon has not heard a word of it. At any rate he has not replied, or changed his posture, or made a motion even to wipe away the blood-red stain that from somewhere has come upon his hitherto immaculate bosom. You may think there is a kind of savagery in our treat-

ment of this eminent personage ; that our discourse, while he is so passively sitting there, better befits a barbaric triumph than a Christian pulpit or the tribunal of a moralist. But—and now we will partially lift the mystery—note that, at last, we have got the criminal, hypocritical Judge down ; at any rate he is down. He can be hypocritical no more. He is dead ; that is all there was of it ; dead by a rush of blood and apoplexy. Is there not reason for a triumph ?

The kind of fictitious mystery wrought about and exhibited in the case of Judge Pyncheon is one of Hawthorne's peculiar and his most characteristic means of exciting his reader's imagination, and his own also. The method is akin to that with which children terrify themselves and one another. He wraps a sheet about some personage, makes him hold it aloft with upstretched arms to give the appearance of ghostly height, causes him to gibber and squeak. Does not your hair rise and your flesh creep a little ? His does. Like a child, for the time being, he half believes in the actuality of the phantom he has pieced out ; and he wins enough of your credence to make you wonder at it. Then, like a child, he tears up his work, perhaps derides it ; for he is not without cynicism, though it is generally held in check by more generous feelings. Mr. Higginbotham—has he been murdered ? Was it really he that passed the toll gate just now on horseback ? He did not stop to shake hands and chat a little as usual ; he gravely

nodded, as one who should say, "Charge my toll," and went on. "'I never saw a man look so yellow and thin as the squire does,' continued the toll-gatherer. 'Says I to myself, to-night, he's more like a ghost or an old mummy than good flesh and blood.' The peddler strained his eyes through the twilight, and could just discern the horseman now far ahead on the village road. He seemed to recognize the rear of Mr. Higginbotham; but through the evening shadows, and amid the dust from the horse's feet the figure appeared dim and unsubstantial, as if the shape of the mysterious old man were faintly moulded of darkness and gray light. Dominicus shivered." You do not quite shiver. Admit, however, that you are in doubt. Skeptical, according to reason, you yet dare not positively assert that this figure is Mr. Higginbotham himself in a sheet woven of dust and twilight, and not Mr. Higginbotham's ghost; especially since you have been told that, wherever he goes, this gentleman must always be at home by a certain hour.

Achieving a kind of effect, like that which is produced by supernatural beings without the actual use of such existences, is this author's most noticeable specialty. His method of accomplishing it is ingenious. He contrives to associate with some character a certain feature or quality, or to subject a personage to some law which superstition has made for such unearthly entities, or with which it has endowed them. A ghost must be home at a given

time; so must Mr. Higginbotham, though, when the truth is known, it is but to mind his business. Mephistopheles is sharp-faced and hump-shouldered; so is Mr. Chillingworth. Phantoms are dim and not clearly defined; so is the Spectre of the Catacombs. And so on. To be plain about it, this manner of treatment produces, not mystery, but mistiness, seen through which objects appear to have unnatural size, or unnatural parts. Clear the fog away, so that their outlines can be plainly discerned, and they will assume normal proportions. Or, if you still choose to consider it a mystery, it is very different from that which Shakspeare and Bunyan created. When Bunyan wished to make a giant or a fiend, when Shakspeare wished to bring up a witch or a ghost, they left no chance for a question as to what the thing was. In their hands enigma took shape and individuality; it was dramatic. Hawthorne makes it only theatric. Something analogous to it, as employed by him, may be seen in places where melodramas are represented. *Snug*, the Joiner, as instructed by *Bottom*, burlesqued it: "If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are: and then, indeed, let him name his name; and tell them plainly he is *Snug*, the Joiner."

Let it be said, however, that Hawthorne's melodramatic incidents and appurtenances are much more deeply impressive than are those seen at the theatre. Prepared for the imagination rather than for the

senses, they are not belittled, rendered ineffective, or reduced to absurdity by attempts to make them tangible. His characters act in ideal scenes; and, with imaginary adjuncts, they present to fancy this kind of theatric effect in its utmost refinement. It is, indeed, the very sublimation of melodrama. But it is, none the less, melodramatic as contradistinguished from dramatic. That this author might not have been a dramatic poet is too much to affirm; that he was not is plain. He failed to manifest the most essential qualities of such an artist. Dramatic juxtapositions, such as may be found in "The Scarlet Letter," for instance, do not constitute a dramatic work. The form, the complication, the proper action, are wanting. Or, if the complication be there, it lacks closeness, what may be called contemporariness, progression, a climacteric and satisfactory undoing. It needs motive power and its resultant movement. It is rather passive than active. It is the product of a meditative, not a practical, man; and the true dramatist is, notably, practical. It is as if, at what should be the dramatic starting point, all the characters had been chloroformed into partial inaction, and were undergoing a process of vivisection; or, rather, that they were made the subjects of an experiment, that, in their different organisms, the man of science might note the subtle operations of poison. The personages do not act: they suffer. This mode of treatment is directly opposed to that of the dramatic poet.

The strongest bent of Hawthorne's mind was toward analysis, not synthesis; to study results, not to operate causes. Even the semi-supernatural additions which he applies to some of his characters are used as chemists employ certain agents, the more easily and distinctly to effect a separation of elements, that the base of each particular compound may be completely eliminated and examined. Most of his works were produced by processes similar to those of analytic chemistry. It would appear that during his somewhat retired and meditative life he never freed himself from the strong impressions made upon his mind when a boy by the legends, traditions, and history of his native town; and that his method was to revive these impressions in all their force by becoming again a little child in feeling, after a plan which Macaulay prescribes for great poets, and then to turn them to account with all the matured skill and intellectual power of an experienced man. Crude matter gathered by the infant was by the adult passed through an alembic. The result is a kind of quintessence. The Black Man in the forest, the night rides, cackling and gibbering of the witches, the haunting terrors of Gallows Hill, the Indians lurking in the shadows and in the twilight, the prowling wolves, and especially that wolf's head nailed to the meeting-house, with the splashes of blood beneath, at thoughts of which, doubtless, he had often, when a child, drawn the bedclothes tight over his head, and many other things, all germinated

in the favoring soil of his imagination and grew and brought forth raw material for distillation.

Tracing the course and effect of some moral poison was his chief study ; warning mankind against it, his literary business. To demonstrate their truth and make his warnings more impressive, he brings his subjects and goes through with his prepared experiments before you. Hester Prynne is contaminated by crime ; Dimmesdale is tainted by crime and hypocrisy ; Chillingworth is envenomed by revenge ; Judge Pyncheon by an inherited virus, breaking out afresh in him ; Miriam by some shadow of wrongdoing, and by a momentary consent to felony ; Zenobia by some great indiscretion ; Hollingsworth by one idea, an overruling purpose which, in the name of charity, makes him most uncharitable ; the Man of Adamant by bigotry ; the Seeker for the Great Carbuncle by avarice, and so on. His conscious duty or his most subtle pleasure was to make known and elucidate, in a dusky way, the workings and fatal results of wickedness, the kind of necessity which springs from wrong-doing, and its all-pervading blight. He seems ever ready to cry out, "Woe is unto me if I preach not this gospel !" "Would that I had a folio to write," he exclaims, "instead of an article of a dozen pages ! Then might I exemplify how an influence beyond our control lays its strong hand on every deed we do, and weaves its consequences into an iron tissue of necessity." "Ah ! now I understand," says Hilda, "how the sins of

generations past have created an atmosphere of sin for those that follow. While there is a single guilty person in the universe, each innocent one must feel his innocence tortured by that guilt." And again, in the Old Manse, he lifts up his voice:

"Come, all ye guilty ones, and rank yourselves in accordance with the brotherhood of crime. This, indeed, is an awful summons. I almost tremble to look at the strange partnerships that begin to be formed, reluctantly, but by the invincible necessity of like to like in this part of the procession. A forger from the State prison seizes the arm of a distinguished financier. How indignantly does the latter plead his fair reputation upon 'Change, and insist that his operations, by their magnificence of scope, were removed into quite another sphere of morality than those of his pitiful companion! But let him cut the connection if he can. Here comes a murderer with his clanking chains, and pairs himself—horrible to tell—with as pure and upright a man, in all observable respects, as ever partook of the consecrated bread and wine. He is one of those, perchance the most hopeless of all sinners, who practice such an exemplary system of outward duties that even a deadly crime may be hidden from their own sight and remembrance under this unreal frostwork. Yet he now finds his place. Why do that pair of flaunting girls, with the pert, affected laugh and the sly leer at the bystanders, intrude themselves into the same rank with yonder decorous matron and that somewhat prudish maiden? Surely these poor creatures, born to vice as their sole and natural inheritance, can be no fit associates for women who have been guarded round about by all the proprieties of domestic life,

and who could not err unless they first created the opportunity. Oh, no; it must be merely the impertinence of those unblushing hussies, and we can only wonder how such respectable ladies should have responded to a summons that was not meant for them. Nothing is more remarkable than the various deceptions by which guilt conceals itself from the perpetrator's conscience, and oftenest, perhaps, by the splendor of its garments. Statesmen, rulers, generals, and all men who act over an extensive sphere, are most liable to be deluded in this way; they commit wrong, devastation, and murder on so grand a scale that it impresses them as speculative rather than actual; but in our procession we find them linked in detestable conjunction with the meanest criminals whose deeds have the vulgarity of petty details. Here the effect of circumstance and accident is done away, and a man finds his rank according to the spirit of his crime, in whatever shape it may have been developed."

However veiled in allegory, or varied in expression by tones of insinuation, innuendo, or irony, this is the burden of his thought, the theme of his discourse. Doubtless, the desire to unfold it in a folio spurred him to write his longer works, the romances. Throughout them all it is the underlying motive. Running through and with this, as a kind of obligato accompaniment, is a secondary theme that has been treated by many, but rarely with more subtle effect. It is plainly enough indicated by the Italian organ-grinder and his puppets:

"The Italian turned a crank; and, behold! every one

of these small individuals started into the most curious activity. The cobbler wrought upon a shoe; the blacksmith hammered his iron; the soldier waved his glittering blade; the lady raised a tiny breeze with her fan; the jolly toper swigged lustily at his bottle; a scholar opened his book, with eager thirst for knowledge, and turned his head to and fro along the page; the milkmaid energetically drained her cow; and a miser counted gold into his strong box—all at the same turning of a crank. Yes, and moved by the self-same impulse, a lover saluted his mistress on her lips! Possibly some cynic, at once merry and bitter, had desired to signify, in this pantomimic scene, that we mortals, whatever our business or amusement,—however serious, however trifling—all dance to one identical tune, and, in spite of our ridiculous activity, bring nothing finally to pass. For the most remarkable aspect of the affair was, that at the cessation of the music, everybody was petrified, at once, from the most extravagant life into dead torpor. Neither was the cobbler's shoe finished, nor the blacksmith's iron shaped out; nor was there a drop less of brandy in the toper's bottle, nor a drop more of milk in the milkmaid's pail, nor one additional coin in the miser's strong box, nor was the scholar a page deeper in his book. All were precisely in the same condition as before they made themselves so ridiculous by their haste to toil, to enjoy, to accumulate gold, and to become wise. Saddest of all, moreover, the lover was none the happier for the maiden's granted kiss."

Thus, the limitations of his work are distinctly enough designated. Largely speaking, he wrought upon and aimed to illustrate but one subject. He

was rather one-sided than many-sided. He was like a dark lantern, shining only in one direction, and there not so much to light up space as to make shadows visible. Clearly and minutely as his individual thoughts are worded, his deeper meaning is not always obvious. He purposely enshrouds it, or purposely leaves it enshrouded in mists, as, for example, in "The Marble Faun." Whether this quality is the consequence of design or not he seems at any rate conscious of it, and, in one place, at least, suggests an excuse for it: "It is true, I have an idea of the character you endeavor to describe; but it is rather by dint of my own thought than your expression.' 'That is unavoidable,' observed the sculptor, 'because the characteristics are all negative.'" This quality may be agreeable, even fascinating to some persons; but most readers prefer not to be left in the dark and forced to guess as to the meaning of an author.

It is hardly to be conceived that a writer possessed by this overruling purpose to study and lay bare the under-currents of crime, to follow "the policy of our ancestors" which, according to him, was "to search out even the most secret sins, and expose them to shame, without fear or favor, in the broadest light of the noonday sun;" who felt that "the most desirable mode of existence might be that of a spiritualized Paul Pry, hovering invisible round man and woman, witnessing their deeds, searching into their hearts, borrowing brightness from their felicity,

and shade from their sorrow, and retaining no emotion peculiar to himself ;” whose mental operations and methods are of the class indicated in the foregoing examination—it is hardly to be conceived that the works of such a writer should be models of art. His thoughts and imagination are not occupied in designing the perfection of beauty, but in discovering its imperfections. His enjoyments are found in investigating the ruin, not in building the temple. He handles the spade, not the trowel ; the scalpel rather than the chisel. He is an artist only so far as a scientific searcher and demonstrator is an artist when he sketches and colors specimens and relics and conditions, and uses these illustrations to elucidate his lectures. Strictly speaking, his romances lack the very essentials of art, form and congruity. The action is arrested at any moment, and for any length of time, that the author may read an essay, or discuss the results of his analyses in a lecture. “The Marble Faun,” for instance, is rather a series of mixed dissertations on Italian art, Italian nature, and the illuminating and developing power of sin, than a novel. The others are more or less like unto it. To be sure there are figures in them. But they are employed as are the lecturer’s mummies, manikins, and speaking machines ; by means of them he more conveniently and impressively expounds his theories. Possibly they may be living persons, but the light is purposely so dim that you cannot be certain of it.

In managing lights this master of melodrama shows his greatest artistic faculty, as has been intimated. Aside from the skill manifested, he in this way works out effects carefully designed, and conveys to others something, intangible and shapeless, indeed, but yet something, which is a unique product of his imagination. "I have sometimes," says he, "produced a singular and not unpleasing effect, so far as my own mind was concerned, by imagining a train of incidents in which the spirit and mechanism of the fairy legend should be combined with the character and manners of familiar life." In achieving combinations analogous to this his greatest work has been done. To make them appear homogeneous, masterly skill in handling lights and shadows is required. In adroit use of what a painter might call *chiaro-oscuro* he is without a rival. But such ingenuity does not alone constitute a painter. Much that is picturesque, sometimes exquisitely so, may be found in his writings. But, viewing his works largely, you miss the potent forming hand of the creative artist. That Hawthorne might have been such is possible; that he manifests many qualities that go with formative power is plain. But the word that calls spheres from chaos is wanting. He is rather a conjuror than a creator; he does not make—he evokes. He is not so much like Shakspeare as he is like Shakspeare's witches. He does not say, "Let me make man," but, with some reader in mind, he mutters,—

"Show his eyes and grieve his heart.
Come like shadows, so depart!"

and straightway, but solemn-paced and slow, the shades appear, linger, whisper together, and vanish. All this demonstrates power of a very extraordinary kind; it is, indeed, unique. But it is not the power of a maker.

His fancy is delicate, active, charming, but not robust; and he is not so much its master as its follower. Yet it has vigor enough to give a poetic turn to many of his thoughts, and to impart a poetic tinge to much of his work. His humor is generally tempered with sarcasm; it is rarely genial, sometimes grim, always subtle. A chiseller of sepulchral monuments tells him how the husband, for whom a wife had ordered a gravestone, suddenly returned alive and well. "'And how,' inquired I, 'did his wife bear the shock of joyful surprise?' 'Why,' said the old man, deepening the grin of a death's head on which his chisel was just then employed, 'I really felt for the poor woman; it was one of my best pieces of marble—and to be thrown away on a living man!'" What he says in the preface to "*Twice Told Tales*" is, in a greater or less degree, true of all his works:

"They have the pale tint of flowers that blossom in too retired a shade—the coolness of a meditative habit, which diffuses itself through the feeling and observation of every sketch. Instead of passion, there is sentiment; and, even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have alle-

gory, not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood, as to be taken into the reader's mind without a shiver. Whether from lack of power or an unconquerable reserve, the author's touches have often an effect of tameness; the merriest man can hardly contrive to laugh at his broadest humor; the tenderest woman, one would suppose, will hardly shed warm tears at his deepest pathos. The book, if you would see anything in it, requires to be read in the clear, brown, twilight atmosphere in which it was written; if opened in the sunshine, it is apt to look exceedingly like a volume of blank pages."

That all manifestations of enthusiasm should be wanting in the writings of a man so given to meditation is not remarkable, but rather a thing of course. Aside from internal testimony, sufficient evidence exists to prove that he pondered long and deeply on all subjects treated by his pen, and that none of his productions were hastily or immaturity brought into the world. In this lies at least a partial explanation of the secret of his exquisite style.

His taste, however, was sometimes at fault; not noticeably as to matters of expression, though at rare intervals he uses some word or gives some word a use not sanctioned by the best authorities; but in collocation of incidents and suggestions, as when he makes Holgrove declare his love for Phebe and Phebe respond as a lover would have her, almost in the same moment that the suitor has told her of Judge Pyncheon's death, and while the body of that ex-magistrate still sits in the next room staring at the

watch in its hand. Rarely, though, does he shock the reader in this way.

Dumas called himself a dramatic poet ; Hawthorne claimed to be a writer of fiction. Both were about equally near the truth. Hawthorne invented so much fiction as should serve to illustrate his doctrines ; and he invented it for that purpose. It held a secondary rank in his thoughts and in his affections, though it is probable that he was not aware of the fact. He was, indeed, not a dramatic poet, not a novelist, not a historian ; he was a moralist, a philosophic moralist, calling upon history, fiction, and poetry to illuminate and enforce his tenets. As an ingenious moral philosopher and essayist, rendering his teachings impressive by the use of fables more or less elaborate, he may well take rank with the most elegant and accomplished writers of his class.

He is emphatically an American author, even in the common and narrower sense of that phrase. He has embellished the legends, traditions, and early history of his native State, and given to certain places a classical interest. He deserved well of his countrymen, and his name is worthily held in honor among them.



A MAN OF TASTE.

MR. HENRY JAMES, JR., has written two sizeable books, which are valuable if not unique additions to our American literature. One is entitled, "A Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales;" the other "Transatlantic Sketches." The first comprises six stories. Of these the one named in the title is, perhaps, the best, though all are interesting, and only one seems unworthy of its associates in the volume, namely, "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes." This appears to lack the genial inspiration and, in its catastrophe, the good taste which all the others manifest; and alone, in all the contents of the two books, it suggests immature production, or the result of a matter-of-fact and uncongenial business-like attempt to make something for the market. Possibly, however, its appearance here is advantageous, in so far as it serves to produce a vivid contrast by which the delicate and artistic completeness of the other tales is more prominently brought out. The author everywhere shows an unusual acquaintance with his own powers, and easy mastery of them. Thought and style are alike gracefully sustained, and the diction is so uniformly fit, forcible, and ele-

gant, that to notice some of the few lapses which occur may appear hypercritical. Yet the general excellence makes faults conspicuous that would otherwise be regarded as venial or escape attention altogether.

In a style like that indicated such phrases as "the white cravat of the period," "an Englishman of the period," "some highly improved projectile of the period," "the hat of the period," are, to say the least, inelegant, and, especially if they recur not infrequently, are likely to give readers of refined and sensitive taste—the very class who will most enjoy reading these books—a sense of being suddenly and unhandsomely let down. So of the Gallicism that many writers are trying to pass off for good English, the use of the painfully general "one" in place of some well individualized and known English pronoun. For instance:

"It is a pleasure that doubles one's horizon, and one can scarcely say whether it enlarges or limits one's impression of the city proper."

"And the work has a deceptive air of being one of their sturdy bequests, which helps one to drop a sigh over Italy's long, long yesterday."

"One would like, after five months in Rome, to be able to make some general statement of one's experience, one's gains. It is not easy. One has a sense of a kind of passion for the place, and of a large number of gathered impressions. Many of these have been intense, momentous, but one has trodden on the other, and one can hardly say what has become of them."

"One cannot describe the beauty of the Italian lakes, nor would one try, if one could."

"But inns and streets in Italy are the vehicles of half one's knowledge; if one has no fancy for their lessons, one may burn one's note-book."

"After all, one says to one's self, as one turns away——"

It is safe to assert that a sense of euphony alone would keep this author from using any other word so inelegantly, to say nothing of such a sentence as this: "Many of these have been intense, momentous, but one has trodden on the other, and one can hardly say what has become of them," where the shifting significance of the term gives the reader a suggestion of being paltered with by verbal jugglery.

In looking through these citations the expression, "It is a pleasure that doubles one's horizon," may have struck the discriminating mind as, at least, ambiguous. It is rather commonly assumed by persons who affect to have no personal knowledge of the fact, that certain pleasures invariably have a tendency not only to double the horizon but to multiply the stars and likewise to render both very unsteady, even vacillating. The general sobriety of the author's work would indicate that he had no such pleasure in his head when he wrote. The words are, nevertheless, indiscreetly chosen.

Ambiguities and obscurities, as well as inadequacies of expression, are so uncommon in these books that those which appear are all the more displeasing

and inexcusable since the writer has plainly shown that they might have been avoided. Two only of these rare defects will be particularly noted and illustrated in the following quotations :

“There is a distinct amenity, however, in my experience of Italy, and I shall probably, in the future, not be above sparing a light regret to several of the hours of which the one I speak of was composed.”

This would seem to indicate a general involution and confusion of horizons, and great indistinctness in the view, or in the vision, generally :

“I shall remember that, as I sat in the garden, and, looking up from my book, saw through a gap in the shrubbery the red house-tiles against the deep blue sky and the gray underside of the ilex leaves turned up by the Mediterranean breeze, I had a vague consciousness that I was not in the Western world.

“If you should also wish to have it, you must not go to Pisa; and, indeed, we are most of us forewarned as to Pisa from an early age.”

The author seems to have written the passages in which these negligences occur, when he was weary, or, at any rate, had for the time a feeling of satiety in regard to the subjects of his work, a kind of mental, or sentimental, indigestion from overfeeding and want of variety in his aliment. To write page after page upon the picturesque aspects of Italy and the picturesque things there and in other countries till the leaves grow to a goodly volume; to sustain a

varied and fresh dissertation upon a subject always the same, however its phases may change, is a work that cannot be done in haste, or when, from weariness or any other cause, the appetite for this kind of beauty flags, and the discriminating and appreciating powers are somnolent. One of the most noticeable things about these books, therefore, is that, with some very rare exceptions, such as have been mentioned, there is no want of freshness, no diminution of graceful vigor, and no drooping of an aerial fancy that never flies too high.

The air of frank sincerity which everywhere pervades these works brings into bolder and more offensive relief an apparent affectation, namely, the unnecessary use of foreign words and phrases. It is easy to conceive that some of these strange terms were introduced with the greatest candor, such, for instance, as, in galleries, cathedrals, ruined castles, wooded heights with classic outlines, and flowery campagnas which seem the very dallying-places of history, have fallen upon the author's ear with peculiar emphasis and significance. He might naturally enough feel that the same word or phrase would impress his reader more forcibly than its English equivalent, without considering the fact that to almost all of those who see his pages, even the remembrance of the associations that added power to such terms when he has heard them, will be wanting; and that to some of those for whom he wrought, these words and phrases, so far from conveying any clear mean-

ing, will but obscure the sentences in which they appear. Yet for their use under the circumstances his honesty of purpose should largely serve as an excuse.

But no charity can forgive in a lover of classic beauty, gentle harmonies, clear expression of ideas, and the rich vigor of his mother-tongue, such wanton violations of good taste and such imperfect English utterance as are exhibited in the following citations:

"Even in a season when he is fatally apt to meet a dozen fellow-pilgrims returning from the shrine, each *gros Jean comme devant*, or to overtake a dozen more."

"And if you think he had better not be in Switzerland, —*rassurez-vous*,—he will not be there long."

"Their aspect seems a sort of influence from the blue glitter of the lake as it plays through the trees with genial *invraisemblance*."

"Your sentimental tourist can never *bouder* long."

"And to form an idea of the *étalage* you must imagine," etc.

"A day somehow to make one feel as if one had seen and felt a great deal,—quite, as I say, like a *héros de roman*."

"His physiognomy was wonderfully *de l'emploi*."

"Yesterday Prince Humbert's little *primogenito* was on the Pincio in an open landau, with his governess."

"The castle is being completely *remis à neuf*."

"A month's tour in Switzerland is no more a *jeu de prince* than a Sunday excursion."

"And finally the friend was produced, *en costume de ville*."

"That she has already flung a sort of *reflet* of her charm over all their undried mortar and plaster."

"The sturdy little musketeer who was trying to impart a *reflet* of authority to the neat little white house."

"A man so much *de son temps* as Byron was."

It may indeed be said, as some sort of extenuation, that, in using these and other foreign terms, the author could hardly have designed to mystify his readers; for he must have been conscious that their significance is tolerably well known even to persons who are least acquainted with the meanings of outlandish words, since, having been brought back, like bits of coin, by so many hasty voyagers and frequently exhibited in testimony of their superior attainments, they have gradually crept into circulation at depreciated values. This is especially true of certain other terms which the author uses freely, and which are even more worn, common, plentiful, and cheap, such, for instance, as "*mise en scène*," "*stat magni nominis umbra*," "*genius loci*," "*coup de théâtre*," "*à fortiori*," "*entrepreneur*," "*coup d'état*," "*status quo*," "*à propos*," "*arrière pensée*," "*con amore*," "*finesse*," "*flânerie*," "*bourgeoise*," etc., etc.

As has been intimated, apart from such blemishes as those already pointed out, the writer's diction is uncommonly fine. Only rarely does his strong desire to give graphic expression to thought lead him into extravagance, as, for example, when he speaks of Rubens's paintings as "carnal cataracts."

Pictures are the subjects of his inmost contemplation. That portion of his life represented by these books, more especially that part of which the "Transatlantic Sketches" are the fruits, was a quest for the picturesque. No knight of the Round Table sought more earnestly or with more singleness of purpose for the Holy Graal than did the author for what would look well in a painting. He has the painter's intelligence and taste, and the critic's discrimination. The generous admiration which he feels for a fine building, is that of the picture-maker rather than that of the architect. He esteems colors more than forms, yet is far from insensible to beautiful shapes and graceful outlines. He loves these not less, but those more. Yet the form which he clearly perceives and instinctively estimates, is that which is defined by the painter, not that which the sculptor makes. Statuary has for him a subordinate charm; he notes it only incidentally. Sitting in a cathedral, he gives himself up to the music-like influences of various degrees and tones of light, the shadows, the colors, the picture for which the architecture serves as an appropriate frame. If at the right time and in the right place, a monk appears costumed harmoniously with all that the physical or mental eye sees grouped about him, he at once becomes the central figure in the painting which the author has already constructed in his own mind:

"A Dominican monk, still young, who showed us the

church, seemed a creature generated from its musty shadows and odors. His physiognomy was wonderfully *de l'emploi*, and his voice, which was most agreeable, had the strangest jaded humility. His lugubrious salute, and sanctimonious impersonal appropriation of my departing franc, would have been a master touch on the stage. While we were still in the church a bell rang, which he had to go and answer, and as he came back and approached us along the nave, he made with his white gown and hood, and his cadaverous face, against the dark church background, one of those pictures which, thank the muses, have not yet been reformed out of Italy. It was strangely like the mental pictures suggested in reading certain plays and poems."

The subdued tone and the harmony of colors to which time and age bring all tints, whether in costume, in works of the brush, or in products of the quarry and the forest, particularly touch the writer. Their effect seems to be the strongest of any received by him even at Rome, and the most pervading everywhere. Its contrast with that produced by the hard, fresh, brilliant coloring to which Americans at home are accustomed can, to a citizen of the great republic, who, like the author, is happy in the possession of a highly refined and cultivated taste, scarcely fail to be as pleasing as it is impressive. Evidences of decay that has been going on for hundreds of years, are novelties, and a stately ruin is a whole romance:

"Turning back into Florence proper, you have local color enough and to spare,—which you enjoy the more, doubt-

less, from standing off to get your light and your point of view. The elder streets, abutting on all this newness, go boring away into the heart of the city in narrow, dusky vistas of a fascinating picturesqueness. Pausing to look down them sometimes, and to penetrate the deepening shadows through which they recede, they seem to me little corridors leading out from the past, as mystical as the ladder in Jacob's dream; and when I see a single figure coming up toward me I am half afraid to wait till it arrives; it seems too much like a ghost,—a messenger from an under world. Florence, paved with its great mosaics of slabs and lined with its massive Tuscan palaces, which, in their large dependence on pure symmetry for beauty of effect, reproduce more than any other modern styles the simple nobleness of Greek architecture, must have always been a stately city, and not especially rich in that ragged picturesqueness—the picturesqueness of poverty—on which we feast our idle eyes at Rome and Naples. Except in the unfinished fronts of the churches, which, however unfortunately, are mere prosaic ugliness, one finds here less romantic shabbiness than in most Italian cities. But at two or three points it exists in perfection,—in just such perfection as proves that often what is literally hideous may be constructively delightful. On the north side of the Arno, between the Ponte Vecchio and the Ponte Santa Trinità, is an ancient row of houses, backing on the river, in whose yellow flood they bathe their aching old feet. Anything more battered and befouled, more cracked and disjointed, dirtier, drearier, shabbier, it would be impossible to conceive. They look as if, fifty years ago, the muddy river had risen over their chimneys and then subsided again, and left them coated forever with its unsightly slime. And yet, forsooth, because

the river is yellow, and the light is yellow, and here and there, elsewhere, some mellow, mouldering surface, some hint of color, some accident of atmosphere, takes up the foolish tale and repeats the note,—because, in short, it is Florence, it is Italy, and you are a magnanimous Yankee, bred amid the micaceous sparkle of brown-stone fronts and lavish of enthusiasm, these miserable dwellings, instead of simply suggesting mental invocations to an enterprising board of health, bloom and glow all along the line in the perfect felicity of picturesqueness. Lately, during the misty autumn nights, the moon has been shining on them faintly, and refining away their shabbiness into something ineffably strange and spectral. The yellow river sweeps along without a sound, and the pale tenements hang above it like a vague miasmatic exhalation. The dimmest back scene at the opera, when the tenor is singing his sweetest, seems hardly to belong to a more dreamily fictitious world."

You see that the writer has a genial imagination. He has also a pleasant, but not overflowing fancy, which for the most part undulates unobtrusively, and occasionally bubbles up with sparkling effect:

"The little broken-visaged effigies of saints and kings and bishops, niched in tiers along this hoary wall, are prodigiously black and quaint and primitive in expression; and as you look at them with whatever contemplative tenderness your trade of hard-working tourist may have left at your disposal, you fancy that somehow they are consciously historical,—sensitive victims of time; that they feel the loss of their noses, their toes, and their crowns; and that when the long June twilight turns at last to a deeper gray, and the quiet of the close to a deeper stillness, they begin

to peer sidewise out of their narrow recesses, and to converse in some strange form of early English, as rigid, yet as candid as their features and postures, moaning like a company of ancient paupers round a hospital fire over their ashes and infirmities and losses, and the sadness of being so terribly old."

He shows capacity for the enjoyment rather than for the production of humor. You fancy that an airy conception of it often tickles his brain, but only rarely does he give it birth in appreciable form, as, for instance, when speaking of the stout woman of Berne :

"Another, a perfect mountain of a woman, is brought forth every morning, lowered with the proper precautions, with her bench, and left there till night. She is always knitting a stocking ; I have an idea that she is the *fournisseuse* of the whole little Swiss army ; or she ought to wear one of these castellated crowns which forms the coiffure of ladies on monuments, and sit there before all men's eyes as the embodied genius of the city—the patroness of Berne. Like the piers of the arcades, she has a most fantastic thickness, and her superfluous fleshly substance could certainly furnish forth a dozen women on the American plan. I suppose she is forty years old, but her tremendous bulk is surmounted by a face of the most infantine freshness and naïveté. She is evidently not a fool ; on the contrary, she looks very sensible and amiable ; her immense circumference has kept experience at bay, and she is perfectly innocent because nothing has ever happened to her."

Nature, for him, has, undoubtedly, many charms.

But, in his character of a sentimental tourist, at least, these charms are very much heightened by suggestions of humanity, and of what belongs or has belonged to it. He is brought into near and perfect sympathy with a landscape only by a more or less vivid faith that it has been peopled, and that it is still a kind of abiding place for dim and dream-like memories :

“At least half the merit of everything you enjoy must be that it suits you absolutely ; but the larger half here, is generally that it has suited some one else, and that you can never flatter yourself you have discovered it. It is historic, literary, suggestive, it has played some other part than it is just then playing to your eyes.”

“And the Medici were a great people! But what remains of it all now is a mere tone in the air, a vague expression in things, a hint to the questioning fancy. Call it much or little, this is the interest of old places. Time has devoured the doers and their doings ; there hovers over the place a perfume of something done. We can build gardens in America, adorned with every device of horticulture, but we unfortunately cannot scatter abroad this strange historic aroma, more exquisite than the rarest roses.”

Perhaps the most valuable as well as most interesting portions of these works are the incidental reviews of master-works of painting. The frank, unaffected, undogmatic style of their criticisms, the nice and exact power of analysis which they manifest, their broad and catholic spirit, the clearly stated reasons by which conclusions are sustained,

must commend them to all, even to the readers whose opinions may differ from those of the author. His "Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales" are deserving of analysis as candid, fine, and catholic as that which he himself effects. If their author goes on to build worthily on the foundation thus laid, his position in American literature should be a proud one.

AN AMERICAN HUMORIST.

MR. BRET HARTE first became widely known as a poet, by his "Plain Language from Truthful James," if that can truthfully be called poetry. This production has probably done more to make its author famous than all that he has written besides. Its quaint slang and forms of ungrammatical usage, till then strangers east of the Rocky Mountains, its suggestive way of presenting a clear picture and a complete action and gratifying catastrophe, with its tersely-forcible description of character and peculiarities, were quite enough to account for the interest aroused by this composition, independent of any poetic qualities.

The kind of celebrity, as well as the rapidity with which it was gained, were strong evidences that this publication contained some insinuating power very different from that of poetry. This is to be found in its humor, which is of the sort particularly relished by Americans, and which seems to be more especially the product of frontier life. At the time when it was written, the peculiar use of the relative pronoun "which"—a rhetorical figure borrowed from the slang of the London cockneys—and other character-

istics in the style of this piece, could be seen in a comic paper published in Australia. But it was novel enough to be uncommonly attractive to staid people on both continents, who habitually heard only conventional forms of speech, and whose spirits were less active than those of explorers, to whom innovation is the rule of life. As a humorist, therefore, not as a poet, Mr. Harte was first introduced to people east of the Rocky Mountains. His candidacy for poetic honors has since been made known; so has his claim to be considered as a writer of fiction. Of the seven volumes which contain his writings completed up to the present time (1876), three are made up of verses and four of short stories in prose. He therefore comes before the critic in the threefold character of humorist, novelist, and poet.

In each of these characters his greatest strength appears to be a wide suggestiveness. But this suggestiveness springs from the play of "temporary inclination, mood, caprice, whim, or fancy," and these are some of the definitions of humor. Even the pathos, which he at times uses with rare skill, manifests one of the phases of humor, which may be black or white, gay or sad, tender or stern. It is a common but erroneous notion that a man is a humorist only when he makes sport for others, or in some way excites their merriment. The comedian is as truly a humorist when he makes his auditors weep as he is when he makes them laugh. The humors of noted wits have produced some of the most pa-

thetic compositions in the English language. In these men the gay is counterbalanced by the sad, the cheerful by the melancholy mood. In a certain sense they are like a great dramatist; they have the capacity of humors, as he has that of characters. As in him the even balance and logical sense impel the production of personages so opposed that a fair equipoise shall be preserved, so in them sportiveness is counterbalanced with pathos. The oscillations of whims and fancies carry them to an equal distance on either side of the median line. In these excursions upon the one side, something ludicrous or grotesque attracts the humorist's gaze; upon it all his attention is at once concentrated; he hovers about it like a bee in search of honey; with microscopic eye, like that of the insect, he peers into every crevice, examines every elevation, explores every wrinkle, investigates every excrescence, measures the obliquity of every line, observes the exact angle of the squint, notes the degree of dissonance in the colors of hair, eyes, complexion, and clothing, gauges the perturbations of gait, passes them all through the alembic of fancy heated by meditation. The result is a humorous picture, or any one of a dozen whimsical resemblances. Generally, persons and things are alike unconscious that they are what Mr. Harte might call rich leads, that they present any ludicrous or touching aspects; and, for the most part, other people fail to see what the humorist alone discovers.

The party at Robinson's Hall, where The Rose of

Tuolumne had been—a “tear” her father called it—had broken up:

“One enamored swain had ridden east, another west, another north, another south; and the object of their adoration, left within her bower at Chemisal Ridge, was calmly going to bed. I regret that I am not able to indicate the exact stage of that process. Two chairs were already filled with delicate inwrappings and white confusion; and the young lady herself, half hidden in the silky threads of her yellow hair, had at one time borne a faint resemblance to a partly-husked ear of Indian corn.”

Mr. McClosky is giving Mr. Ashe some pertinent history of his domestic affairs, and more especially of his marriage, and what followed it:

“Many little things sorter tended to make our home in Missouri onpleasant. A disposition to smash furniture and heave knives around; an inelination to howl when drunk, and that frequent; a habitooal use of vulgar language, and a tendeney to cuss the easoal visitor,—seemed to pint,’ added Mr. McClosky, with submissive hesitation, ‘that—she—was—so to speak—quite onsuited to the marriage relation in its holiest aspeek.

“‘At the end of two year,’ continued Mr. McClosky, still intent on the valise, ‘I allowed I’d get a divoree. Et about thet time, however, Providence sends a circus into thet town, and a feller ez rode three horses to onet. Hevin’ allez a taste for athletic sports, she left town with this feller, leavin’ me and Jinny behind. I sent word to her thet, if she would give Jinny to me, we’d call it quits. And she did.

“‘She went to Kansas; from Kansas she went into Texas;

from Texas she eventooally come to Californy. Being here, I've purvided her with money when her business was slack, through a friend. She's gettin' rather old and shaky for hosses, and now does the tight rope and flying trapeze. Never heven' seen her perform,' continued Mr. McClosky, with conscientious caution, 'I can't say how she gets on. On the bills she looks well. Thar is a poster.'"

Jenny (The Rose) heard a knock at her door, and asked who was there :

"An apologetic murmur on the other side of the door was the response.

" 'Why, father ! is that you ?'

"There were further murmurs, affirmative, deprecatory, and persistent.

" 'Wait,' said the 'Rose.' She got up, unlocked the door, leaped nimbly into bed again, and said, 'Come.'

"The door opened timidly. The broad, stooping shoulders and grizzled head of a man past the middle age appeared ; after a moment's hesitation, a pair of large, diffident feet, shod with canvas slippers, concluded to follow. When the apparition was complete, it closed the door softly and stood there, a very shy ghost indeed, with apparently more than the usual spiritual indisposition to begin a conversation. The 'Rose' resented this impatiently, though, I fear, not altogether intelligibly.

" 'Do, father, I declare !'

" 'You was abed, Jinny,' said Mr. McClosky, slowly, glancing with a singular mixture of masculine awe and paternal pride upon the two chairs and their contents, 'you was abed and ondressed.'

" 'I was.'

" 'Surely,' said Mr. McClosky, seating himself on the extreme edge of the bed and painfully tucking his feet away under it, 'surely.' After a pause he rubbed a short, thick, stumpy beard, that bore a general resemblance to a badly-worn blacking-brush, with the palm of his hand, and went on, 'You had a good time, Jinny.'

" 'Yes, father.'

" 'They was all there?'

" 'Yes; Rance, and York, and Ryder, and Jack.'

" 'And Jack!' Mr. McClosky endeavored to throw an expression of arch inquiry into his small, tremulous eyes; but meeting the unabashed, widely opened lid of his daughter, he winked rapidly and blushed to the roots of his hair.

" 'Yes, Jack was there,' said Jinny, without change of color or the least self-consciousness in her great gray eyes; 'and he came home with me.' She paused a moment, locking her two hands under her head, and assuming a more comfortable position on the pillow. 'He asked me that same question again, father, and I said "Yes." It's to be—soon. We're going to live at Four Forks, in his own house; and next winter we're going to Sacramento. I suppose it's all right, father, eh?' She emphasized the question with a slight kick through the bedclothes, as the parental McClosky had fallen into an abstract reverie.

" 'Yes, surely,' said Mr. McClosky, recovering himself with some confusion. After a pause he looked down at the bedclothes, and patting them tenderly, continued: 'You couldn't have done better, Jinny. They isn't a girl in Tuolumne ez could strike it ez rich as you hev,—even if they got the chance.' He paused again, and then said: 'Jinny.'

“ ‘Yes, father.’

“ ‘You’re in bed, and undressed?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘You couldn’t,’ said Mr. McClosky, glancing hopelessly at the two chairs, and slowly rubbing his chin,—‘you couldn’t dress yourself again, could yer?’

“ ‘Why, father!’

“ ‘Kinder get yourself into them things again?’ he added, hastily. ‘Not all of ’em, you know, but some of ’em. Not if I helped you,—sorter stood by and lent a hand now and then with a strap, or a buckle, or a necktie, or a shoestring?’ he continued, still looking at the chairs, and evidently trying to boldly familiarize himself with their contents.

“ ‘Are you crazy, father?’ demanded Jenny, suddenly sitting up, with a portentous switch of her yellow mane. Mr. McClosky rubbed one side of his beard, which already had the appearance of having been quite worn away by that process, and faintly dodged the question.

“ ‘Jinny,’ he said, tenderly stroking the bedclothes as he spoke, ‘this yer’s what’s the matter. Thar’s a stranger down stairs—a stranger to you, lovey, but a man ez I’ve knowed a long time. He’s been here about an hour; and he’ll be here until fower o’clock, when the up-stage passes. Now I wants ye, Jinny dear, to get up and come down stairs, and kinder help me pass the time with him. It’s no use, Jinny,’ he went on, gently raising his hand to deprecate any interruption, ‘it’s no use! He won’t go to bed; he won’t play keerds; whiskey don’t take no effect on him. Ever since I knowed him he was the most unsatisfactory critter to hev round. * * *

“ ‘You see, Jinny,’ continued Mr. McClosky, apologetically, ‘he’s known me a long time.’

"But his daughter had already dismissed the question with her usual directness. 'I'll be down in a few moments, father,' she said after a pause; 'but don't say anything to him about it—don't say I was abed.'"

You see how the mirthful mood has predominated thus far, though you have been touched by old McCloskey's diffidence, tenderness, and deference toward his daughter. But now the line is clearly and suddenly crossed. A pathetic impulse has seized the writer. His is no longer a laughing or a mocking, it is now wholly a tearful humor:

"Mr. McClosky's face beamed. 'You was allers a good girl, Jinny,' he said, dropping on one knee, the better to imprint a respectful kiss on her forehead. But Jenny caught him by the wrists, and for a moment held him captive. 'Father,' said she, trying to fix his shy eyes with the clear, steady glance of her own, 'all the girls that were there to-night had some one with them. Mame Robinson had her aunt, Lucy Rance had her mother, Kate Pierson had her sister—all except me had some other woman. Father, dear,' her lips trembled just a little, 'I wish mother hadn't died when I was so small. I wish there was some other woman in the family besides me. I ain't lonely with you, father dear; but if there was only some one, you know, when the time comes for John and me——'

"Her voice here suddenly gave out, but not her brave eyes, that were still fixed earnestly upon his face. Mr. McClosky, apparently tracing out a pattern on the bed-quilt, essayed words of comfort.

"'Thar ain't one of them gals ez you've named, Jinny,

ez could do what you've done, with a whole Noah's ark of relations at their backs! Thar ain't one ez wouldn't sacrifice her nearest relation to make the strike that you hev. Ez to mothers, maybe, my dear, you're doing better without one.' He rose suddenly, and walked toward the door. When he reached it, he turned, and, in his old deprecating manner, said: 'Don't be long, Jinny,' smiled, and vanished from the head downward, his canvas slippers asserting themselves resolutely to the last."

Only when you come to know that Jenny is not McClosky's daughter, that she was born out of wedlock of the woman whom McClosky afterward married, supposing her to be a widow, and with whom, when she left him to go with the man who could ride three horses at once, he agreed to call it quits if she would give him the child, do you perceive all the pathos of this scene.

Well, Jenny went down-stairs to help entertain the stranger. He was a young man, educated and well bred, something of a poet also. She had never seen his like before; probably, before then he had never seen her like. She talked with unconscious frankness and freedom from constraint; he, with uncommon ardor. When it was time for the up-stage to pass she offered to go with him to the cross roads, for she felt somehow as if he needed and were under her protection:

"It was a lovely night. The moon swung low, and languished softly on the snowy ridge beyond. There were quaint odors in the still air; and a strange incense from

the woods perfumed their young blood, and seemed to swoon in their pulses. Small wonder that they lingered on the white road, that their feet climbed unwillingly the little hill where they were to part, and that, when they at last reached it, even the saving grace of speech seemed to have forsaken them.

“For there they stood alone. There was no sound nor motion in earth, or woods, or heaven. They might have been the one man and woman for whom this goodly earth that lay at their feet, rimmed with the deepest azure, was created. And, seeing this, they turned toward each other with a sudden instinct, and their hands met, and then their lips in one long kiss.”

And then Jenny went home, and felt very lonely. Tears gathered in her sweet eyes as she sat by the window watching the stars as they paled away, and the brightening east as the dawn came on :

“The straggling line of black picket fence below, that had faded away with the stars, came back with the sun. What was that object moving by the fence? Jenny raised her head and looked intently. It was a man endeavoring to climb the pickets, and falling backward with each attempt. Suddenly she started to her feet, as if the rosy flushes of the dawn had crimsoned her from forehead to shoulders; then she stood, white as the wall, with her hands clasped upon her bosom; then, with a single bound, she reached the door, and, with flying braids and fluttering skirt, sprang down stairs, and out to the garden walk. When within a few feet of the fence, she uttered a cry, the first she had given—the cry of a mother over her stricken babe, of a tigress over her mangled cub; and in

another moment she had leaped the fence, and knelt beside Ridgeway, with his fainting head upon her breast.

“‘My boy, my poor, poor boy! who has done this?’ Who indeed? His clothes were covered with dust; his waistcoat was torn open; and his handkerchief, wet with the blood it could not staunch, fell from a cruel stab beneath his shoulder.

“‘Ridgeway, my poor boy! tell me what has happened.’

“Ridgeway slowly opened his heavy blue-veined lid, and gazed upon her. Presently a gleam of mischief came into his dark eyes, a smile stole over his lips as he whispered slowly,—

“‘It—was—your kiss—did it, Jenny dear! I had forgotten—how high-priced the article was here. Never mind, Jenny!’—he feebly raised her hand to his white lips,—‘it was—worth it,’ and fainted away.

Jenny started to her feet, and looked wildly around her. Then, with a sudden resolution, she stooped over the insensible man, and with one strong effort lifted him in her arms as if he had been a child. When her father, a moment later, rubbed his eyes and awoke from his sleep upon the veranda, it was to see a goddess, erect and triumphant, striding toward the house with the helpless body of a man lying across that breast where man had never lain before,—a goddess, at whose imperious mandate he arose, and cast open the doors before her. And then, when she had laid her unconscious burden on the sofa, the goddess fled; and a woman, helpless and trembling, stood before him,—a woman that cried out that she had ‘killed him,’ that she was ‘wicked, wicked!’ and that, even saying so, staggered, and fell beside her late burden. And all that Mr. McClosky could do was to feebly rub his beard, and say to

himself vaguely and incoherently, that 'Jinny had fetched him.' "

This humor is a subtle, penetrating, permeating fluid. It moves with electric speed, is seen here and there, at times when most unexpected and in the most improbable places. It pierces the thickest disguises, sounds invisible depths, lights with its flashes the darkest spots, reveals fascinations under the most forbidding forms, affords glimpses of beauty beneath the most repulsive exteriors. It gives tongue to sorrows which a dumb animal vainly tries to express, furnishes words for griefs which the speaking creature vainly strives to conceal, and the unsuccessful efforts of each equally stimulate its pathetic moods. It deals with incident rather than with character, with situation rather than with sequence. It is in some respects antagonistic to the logical faculty, and the two, largely developed, are rarely found together. When associated, each in strong force, they indicate a great man, who, if he have also an inventive imagination, may create great things, great characters, great poems, great dramas. If he be also a humorist, his different moods are manifested, for the most part, each in a different personage of his creation. That which the truly creative genius moulds, as their principal ingredients, into complete, consistent, and original works, the mere humorist uses as the fresco-painter does his colors, to set off and adorn, often after a grotesque fashion, the dull interior or blank

walls of some existing structure, laying on light, dark, or mixed tints as his fancy may prompt. He does not infuse his moods into a creation at its conception or at its birth; he fits them to a thing in being, something ready made to his hand, something that is unconsciously peculiar, or that suggests humorous peculiarities. Set in full play by a suggestion, his whims may take a large range, may go widely from the point of departure, may even bring together a semblance of something newly made; but if analyzed, new substance in the apparition is found to be wanting. It has no well-knit articulations, no bony system, no solid flesh, no muscular action.

That Mr. Harte is a humorist has been sufficiently shown. But he is something more than this. That, in his different moods, he sometimes manifests an exquisite fancy, is plain to any reader of his works. He has not yet demonstrated the possession of creative power in any high degree, but he has given indications that he holds its germ, and that it may be developed. He can make a statue, so enlarging and idealizing the original that his work appears to be his own invention. But he cannot, at any rate he has not, composed a group, or given his statue any obvious relation to any other, or to anything outside of itself. His stories are like the sketches and studies which a painter might make; but the great painter's ability to construct of these studies a well-arranged composition, with a true interdependence of parts and a unity of purpose, to the accomplishment

and significance of which every stroke of the brush contributes something, he has not displayed. In his metrical as well as in his prose stories, he shows a certain kind of dramatic faculty. He has a quick perception of what is called a dramatic situation, especially that kind of situation suitable to melodrama. But with the working up of one such scene at a time his purpose ends; the scene leads to nothing beyond, has no necessary connection with anything that precedes. Generally it is complete in itself, and has clearly-defined outlines. Generally, also, it has distinct, well-regulated, and vigorous action. This, however, is of the simplest kind, beginning and ending with the catastrophe.

He has a keen and infallible eye for a rough diamond, and great skill in polishing it. All its facets are made to reflect some shade of his humor. If the diamond be very much soiled, or even somewhat scarred and broken, so much the better for him; its inherent qualities are all the brighter by contrast. He had the good fortune early in life to go where such gems were found very rough, if discovered at all, and where no one but himself was able to perceive their worth, to cut them out of their uncleanness, and give them an advantageous setting. He perceived that a rich mine of strange, strong, stirring novelties was unearthed, and he had the taste and judgment to prize them at their just valuation. As, with the indifference of familiarity, they were thrown out and disregarded by all sorts of explorers, he

gathered them up, prepared them for the foreign market, like a merchant who knew their worth, and expected from them large and honorable profits. He especially delights in showing some touching humorous trait in an imbecile, a drunkard, a gambler, or a fallen woman. When in a pathetic mood he takes them up, breaks the hard crust of degradation with which they are covered and in a measure concealed, washes away the filth, sometimes with tears, and at the last moment reveals a human soul redeemed and lighted by some divine attribute :

“ ‘Do you think,’ said Mrs. Tretherick with an embarrassed voice and a prodigious blush, looking down, and addressing the fiery curls just visible in the folds of her dress,—‘do you think you will be “dood” if I let you stay in here and sit with me?’

“ ‘And let me tall you mamma?’ queried Carry, looking up.

“ ‘And let you call me mamma!’ assented Mrs. Tretherick with an embarrassed laugh.

“ ‘Yeth,’ said Carry, promptly.

“ ‘They entered the bedroom together. Carry’s eye instantly caught sight of the trunk.

“ ‘Are you dowin away adain, mamma?’ she said with a quick, nervous look, and a clutch at the woman’s dress.

“ ‘No-o,’ said Mrs. Tretherick, looking out of the window.

“ ‘Only playing your dowin away,’ suggested Carry with a laugh. ‘Let me play too.’

“ ‘Mrs. Tretherick assented. Carry flew into the next room, and presently reappeared, dragging a small trunk,

into which she gravely proceeded to pack her clothes. Mrs. Tretherick noticed that they were not many. A question or two regarding them brought out some further replies from the child ; and, before many minutes had elapsed, Mrs. Tretherick was in possession of all her earlier history. But, to do this, Mrs. Tretherick had been obliged to take Carry upon her lap, pending the most confidential disclosures. They sat thus a long time after Mrs. Tretherick had apparently ceased to be interested in Carry's disclosures ; and, when lost in thought, she allowed the child to rattle on unheeded, and ran her fingers through the scarlet curls.

" ' You don't hold me right, mamma,' said Carry at last, after one or two uneasy shiftings of position.

" ' How should I hold you ?' asked Mrs. Tretherick with a half-amused, half-embarrassed laugh.

" ' Dis way,' said Carry, curling up into position, with one arm around Mrs. Tretherick's neck, and her cheek resting on her bosom,— ' dis way,—dere.' After a little preparatory nestling, not unlike some small animal, she closed her eyes, and went to sleep.

" For a few moments the woman sat silent, scarcely daring to breathe in that artificial attitude. And then, whether from some occult sympathy in the touch, or God best knows what, a sudden fancy began to thrill her. She began by remembering an old pain that she had forgotten, an old horror that she had resolutely put away all these years. She recalled days of sickness and distrust,—days of an overshadowing fear,—days of preparation for something that was to be prevented, that *was* prevented, with mortal agony and fear. She thought of a life that might have been,—she dared not say *had* been,—and wondered. It was six years ago : if it had lived it would have been as

old as Carry. The arms which were folded loosely around the sleeping child began to tremble and tighten their clasp. And then the deep potential impulse came, and with a half-sob, half-sigh, she threw her arms out, and drew the body of the sleeping child down, down, into her breast,—down again and again as if she would hide it in the grave dug there years before. And the gust that shook her passed, and then, ah me! the rain."

Mrs. Tretherick is one of the most respectable personages of her sex to be met with in Mr. Harte's works. Mrs. Decker is an unfaithful wife and a detestable woman; so is Mrs. Brown; so is Mrs. Skaggs; so is Jenny's mother. The mother of "The Luck of Roaring Camp," the mother of Tom in the "Idyl of Red Gulch," the motherly Miggles, the "Outcasts of Poker Flat," and others belong to a class which cannot be mentioned in polite society. Mr. John Oakhurst and Jack Hamlin are gamblers. Col. Starbottle is a repulsively vulgar pretender to the character of a chivalrous gentleman; he is, moreover, a drunkard and a duellist. Old Man Plunket is a sot; so is Johnson, one of Mrs. Skaggs's husbands. "The Fool of Five Forks" seems to be little better than an imbecile, as does also "The Man of No Account."

When these subjects pass in review, you are tempted to ask whether what has been said of Sterne is true of Mr. Harte: "If he goes into dirty places, it is because they are forbidden, and not frequented. What he seeks there is singularity and scandal. The

allurement of this forbidden fruit is not the fruit, but the prohibition ; for he bites by preference where the fruit is withered or worm-eaten." Seeing, however, that in most of these personages he contrives to uncover some generous or noble quality that has escaped destruction or degradation, you may be inclined to answer your own query by the assertion that uncommon humanity in the author, a magnanimity unrestrained by conventionalities, and not blinded by prejudices, dictated his choice of characters. This, probably, is true to some extent ; but the stronger reason for the use of such subjects is, doubtless, the fact that their originals, at any rate their suggestions, surrounded him on every side in California as it was when the seeds of these tales were planted in his mind. He did not create ; he chose from what was ready to his hand that which appealed most directly to his humor.

Mr. Harte's verses have the same general character as his prose. In metrical composition, however, his humor has not free play. His fancy is restrained by the laws of versification ; he is hampered by rhythm and rhyme. The use of slang and the violation of grammatical rules are what he improperly dignifies by the appellation, dialect. The disregard of all canons of elegant composition, which the employment of such dialect permits, gives wider and freer scope to the humorist's whims ; and thus it happens that, so far as breadth of conception and treatment, vigor and liveliness are concerned, some of his

best metrical writings may be found in this class. Even were there a greater deficiency of poetic qualities in the works of this sort, the strangeness and the boldness of their style would, in large measure, prevent its detection by the ordinary reader :

“ Beautiful ! Sir, you may say so. Thar isn’t her match
in the county.

Is thar, old gal,—Chiquita, my darling, my beauty ?

Feel of that neck, sir,—thar’s velvet ! Whoa ! Steady,—
ah, will you, you vixen !

Whoa ! I say. Jack, trot her out ; let the gentleman
look at her paces.

“ Morgan !—She ain’t nothin’ else, and I’ve got the papers
to prove it.

Sired by Chippewa Chief, and twelve hundred dollars
won’t buy her.

Briggs of Tuolumne owned her. Did you know Briggs
of Tuolumne ?—

Busted hisself in White Pine, and blew out his brains
down in ‘Frisco ?

“ Hedn’t no savey—hed Briggs. Thar, Jack ! that’ll do,—
quit that foolin’ !

Nothin’ to what she kin do, when she’s got her work cut
out before her.

Hosses is hosses, you know, and likewise, too, jockeys is
jockeys ;

And ’t ain’t ev’ry man as can ride as knows what a hoss
has got in him.

“ Know the old ford on the Fork, that nearly got Flanigan’s
leaders ?

Nasty in daylight, you bet, and a mighty rough ford in
low water !

Well, it ain’t six weeks ago that me and the Jedge and
his nevey

Struck for that ford in the night, in the rain, and the
water all round us ;

“ Up to our flanks in the gulch, and Rattlesnake creek just
a bilin’,

Not a plank left in the dam, and nary a bridge on the
river.

I had the gray, and the Jedge had his roan, and his nevey,
Chiquita ;

And after us trundled the rocks jest loosed from the top
of the cañon.

“ Lickity, lickity, switch, we came to the ford, and Chiquita
Buckled right down to her work, and afore I could yell to
her rider,

Took water jest at the ford, and there was the Jedge and
me standing,

And twelve hundred dollars of hoss-flesh afloat, and a
driftin’ to thunder !

“ Would ye b’lieve it ? that night that hoss, that ar’ filly,
Chiquita,

Walked herself into her stall, and stood there, all quiet
and drippin’ :

Clean as a beaver or rat, with nary a buckle of harness,
Just as she swam the Fork,—that hoss, that ar’ filly,
Chiquita.

"That's what I call a hoss! and— What did you say?—

Oh, the nevey?

Drownded, I reckon,—leastways, he never kem back to deny it.

Ye see the derved fool had no seat,—ye couldn't have made him a rider;

And then, ye know, boys will be boys, and hosses—well, hosses is hosses!"

You cannot fail to notice the movement in these lines, the rush of the riders, the rocks rolling behind them, the fall of the rain, the mad plunge of the filly, the sweeping current, the swift coming home. You perceive how vividly the scene is presented, and with how few words; how little is actually told, how much suggested. Two of the suggestions especially strike you: the care for the filly, the carelessness for the man. You know that such indifference was characteristic of the society that was then in California, and is not a poetic invention; and you know that such tender care of a horse may be seen wherever are jockeys. You discern likewise how much the artist's task is diminished by the use of these broken sentences, these dashes, exclamation and interrogation points, by these suggestions, in fact. In his more conventional versification, want of smoothness, melody, and the decorations of fancy are readily perceived. Verse-writing is only another process by which he works the rich ores found in his California mine; the subjects chosen for poetic treatment are very much like those selected for prose.

“ Drunk and senseless in his place,
Prone and sprawling on his face,
More like brute than any man
Alive or dead—

By his great pump out of gear,
Lay the peon engineer,
Waking only just to hear,
Overhead,

Angry tones that called his name,
Oaths and cries of bitter blame—

Waked to hear all this, and waking turned and fled !

“ ‘ To the man who’ll bring to me,’
Cried Intendant Harry Lee,—
Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine,—
‘ Bring the sot alive or dead,
I will give to him,’ he said,
‘ Fifteen hundred *pesos* down,
Just to set the rascal’s crown
Underneath this heel of mine :
Since but death
Deserves the man whose deed,
Be it vice or want of heed,
Stops the pumps that give us breath,—
Stops the pumps that suck the death
From the poisoned lower levels of the mine !’

“ No one answered, for a cry
From the shaft rose up on high ;
And shuffling, scrambling, tumbling from below,
Came the miners each, the bolder
Mounting on the weaker’s shoulder,



Grappling, clinging to their hold or
 Letting go,
 As the weaker gasped and fell
 From the ladder to the well,—
 To the poisoned pit of hell
 Down below !

“ ‘To the man who sets them free,’
 Cried the foreman, Harry Lee,—
 Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine,—
 ‘Brings them out and sets them free,
 I will give that man,’ said he,
 ‘Twice that sum, who with a rope
 Face to face with Death shall cope.
 Let him come who dares to hope!’
 ‘Hold your peace!’ some one replied,
 Standing by the foreman’s side;
 ‘There has one already gone, whoe’er he be!’

“ Then they held their breath with awe,
 Pulling on the rope, and saw
 Fainting figures reappear,
 On the black rope swinging clear,
 Fastened by some skilful hand from below ;
 Till a score the level gained,
 And but one alone remained,—
 He the hero and the last,
 He whose skilful hand made fast
 The long line that brought them back to hope and cheer !

“ Haggard, gasping, down dropped he
 At the feet of Harry Lee,—

Harry Lee, the English foreman of the mine;
‘I have come,’ he gasped, ‘to claim
Both rewards. Señor, my name
Is Ramon !
I’m the drunken engineer,—
I’m the coward, Señor——’ Here
He fell over by that sign
Dead as stone !”

It is hardly needful to call attention to the contrast as to freedom and strength, terseness and vivacity, between these verses and the story of Chiquita; or to comment upon the plain diffuseness, repetitions, tautologies, and puerilities into which the necessity for logical continuity of thought and the constraints of more conventional versification have forced the author.

He delights in melodramatic characters, melodramatic costumes, melodramatic surprises, emotions, effects. He never rises to the dignity of tragic passion, rarely preserves, even for a short time, the repose of the idyl, only occasionally touches what, in the narrower sense of the term, is called sentimental, and then most briefly. Not infrequently he gives graphic and tasteful sketches of natural scenery, which are never too minute, never too much prolonged. Nevertheless, the stage on which his personages move is, for the most part, decorated with melodramatic adjuncts, bright colors, harsh contrasts, lime lights, red fire, storms, floods, caverns, precipices.

“ We checked our pace,—the red road sharply rounding ;
 We heard the troubled flow
Of the dark olive depths of pines, resounding
 A thousand feet below.

“ Above the tumult of the cañon lifted,
 The gray hawk breathless hung ;
Or on the hill a wingèd shadow drifted
 Where furze and thorn-bush clung :

“ Or where half-way the mountain side was furrowed
 With many a seam and scar ;
Or some abandoned tunnel dimly burrowed,—
 A mole hill seen so far.

“ We looked in silence down across the distant
 Unfathomable reach :
A silence broken by the guide’s consistent
 And realistic speech.

“ Walker of Murphy’s blew a hole through Peters
 For telling him he lied ;
Then up and dusted out of South Hornitos
 Across the long Divide.

“ We run him out of Strong’s, and up through Eden,
 And ’cross the ford below ;
And up this cañon (Peters’ brother leadin’),
 And me and Clark and Joe.

“ He fou’t us game : somehow, I disremember
 Jest how the thing kem round ;
Some say ’twas wadding, some a scattered ember
 From fires on the ground.

“ ‘ But in one minute all the hill below him
Was just one sheet of flame ;
Guardin’ the crest, Sam Clark and I called to him.
And,—well, the dog was game !

“ ‘ He made no sign : the fires of hell were round him,
The pit of hell below.
We sat and waited, but we never found him ;
And—then we turned to go.

“ ‘ And then—you see that rock that’s grown so bristly
With chaparral and tan—
Suthin’ crep’ out : it might hev been a grizzly,
It might hev been a man ;

“ ‘ Suthin’ that howled, and gnashed its teeth and shouted
In smoke and dust and flame ;
Suthin’ that sprang into the depths about it,
Grizzly or man,—but game !

“ ‘ That’s all. Well, yes, it does look rather risky,
And kinder makes one queer
And dizzy looking down. A drop of whiskey
Ain’t a bad thing right here ! ’ ”

In all this author’s writings the continued and often very strong and rapid movement is characteristic of a humorist’s fancy, which, when his attention is aroused, can never be kept at rest.

His diction, both in prose and verse, is not rich, his vocabulary not large. He is often at a loss for synonymes, and repetitions of the same words and

phrases are sometimes so frequent as to attract the reader's attention. In each kind of writing he so uses the language at his command that his meaning is, at least generally, expressed with force. His pictures are strong, clearly and sharply defined, very rarely encumbered or confused by even the lightest superfluous strokes. If he cannot create or construct largely, he has unusual skill in augmenting and coloring, in bringing salient points into high relief. Yet when reading his metrical compositions you feel the want of genuine poetic enthusiasm; you miss the grace and the sweep of truly poetic imagination; you perceive that the stanzas are not the irrepressible product of teeming inspiration.

His prose is, in almost every respect, better than his verse. In both kinds of work he constantly exhibits the same characteristics, and the same limitations. These are not such as circumscribe and distinguish the great poet or novelist; but they clearly indicate a high order and exquisite kind of humorist.

A SON WHO WOULD EMULATE HIS FATHER.

NOBILITY obliges. The son of a noble father should be noble; the son of a gifted father should have gifts. Such is the reasonable or unreasonable sentiment of mankind, and, to a certain degree, this sentiment becomes a rule by which the judgment is more or less guided in determining the merit and rank of a great man's son, so far as his qualities are indicated by his doings. Though the rule may be rational, it is often irrationally applied. For the public, frequently the critics also, who sit in judgment on the son, do not ask whether he does well, or whether he does as his father did at the same age, but whether the boy's first attempts are equal to the sire's most perfect achievements. They test the son's beginnings by the father's endings. Unconsciously or otherwise, this rule is used more or less in judging the works of Mr. Julian Hawthorne. His father's name holds a lofty place on the roll of American men of genius. His best works have become the standard by which the achievements of a Hawthorne are to be estimated. It is forgotten that "after quitting college he resided many years in Salem, leading a solitary life of meditation and

study, a recluse from his own household, walking out by night and passing the day alone in his room, writing wild tales, most of which he burned, and some of which, in newspapers, magazines, and annuals, led a wandering, uncertain, and mostly unnoticed life"; that in 1832, when he was twenty-eight years old, "he published in Boston an anonymous romance, which he has never since claimed, and which the public have not been able to identify." It is not known, at least not remembered, that his "Twice-Told Tales," published when he was thirty-three years old, attracted little attention from the general public, although "the book was noticed with high praise in the *North American Review* by Mr. Longfellow, who pronounced it the work of a man of genius and of a true poet." Mr. Nathaniel Hawthorne was forty-two years old when he published "Mosses from an Old Manse," and forty-six when the public was stirred by "'The Scarlet Letter,' a powerful romance of early New England life, which became at once exceedingly popular, and established for its author a high and wide-spread reputation."

Now, if the stature of the son is to be gauged by that of the father, it is but fair that the measurements which are to be compared should be taken at the same period of life. The size and strength of the boy should not be contrasted, to his disadvantage, with that of the full-grown man. A more catholic method of criticism, however, would be to judge the works of both by a broad and universal

standard, estimating each according to its individual merits. After such a method should we examine "Idolatry," Mr. Julian Hawthorne's book, recently published, and criticise it as a romance and as a literary work.

This book bears certain general family resemblances to the composition of the elder Hawthorne; but whether these result from a filial desire to honor, by imitating, a worthy sire, or are inherited characteristic features of the young author's mind, cannot yet be determined. He shows a strong desire to invest his story with a certain wildness; to suggest in it something phantasmal; to surround it with a weird atmosphere, made at times even a little lurid; to render it mysterious. But he either does not comprehend the difference between the strong and the weak, the artistic and the non-artistic, the right and the wrong way of making a mystery, or he is, as yet, unable to choose and to use the right and to reject the wrong. A painting may be mysterious if its outlines and the subjects of which it is composed are so badly distinguished that the spectator cannot discover the nature, size, and shape of the objects, the purpose of the colors, or the painter's design. But such mystery is unattractive, unartistic, does not produce the proper effect of mystery, only excites indifference or contempt. Another painting may be mysterious, that is, it may accomplish the purpose of mystery when so used, namely, to awaken what is called mysterious awe, by portraying with

striking distinctness beings of themselves mysterious, but so well delineated that their apparent reality causes in the beholder a certain awful dread, or a kind of agreeable terror. Those who would deal with the mysterious should have the magical power to master and command it; should be able to give it form, and consistency of character and action; otherwise it overwhelms them, and they share the fate of presuming dabblers in the black art. So far as this particular matter is concerned the work of the author of "Idolatry" is more like the first than the second painting mentioned. He seems not yet to have obtained the mastery of such powers as he owns. They are too apt to carry him headlong first in one direction, then in another. He has not acquired the skill, if he possesses the strength, to guide the chariot which his father conducted with so steady a hand. While preparing to set out he is jaunty, flippant, apparently quite at his ease; shakes the reins gayly, seems assured of the mastery, appears to have the steeds under control. So long as this seeming control lasts he is not in earnest, somewhat vauntingly displays his insincerity, wants the spectators to understand that he is not seriously going into the business of driving the fiery horses, is about to handle the ribbons for a lark. But when, after these preliminaries, he mounts the car and is launched in full career, he is more in earnest, addresses himself more seriously to the work; but the control is gone. Bunyan, De Foe, and others

have dealt with fables, mysteries, and improbabilities in such a way as to make them appear probable and plain, with the force and interest of realities. But they were thoroughly zealous, ostensibly believed all that they related, gave due heed to cause and effect, to logical sequence therefore, made their microcosms consistent, harmonious, complete; matters in regard to which Mr. Julian Hawthorne is far too negligent.

Even when about to introduce his talisman he takes pains to disenchant his readers by constantly appearing in his own proper person, walks up and down and sings, that they shall hear he is not afraid, tells them plainly himself that he is no lion, but only Snug, the joiner :

“Story-tellers labor under one disadvantage which is peculiar to their profession,—the necessity of omniscience. This tends to make them too arbitrary, leads them to disregard the modesty of nature and the harmonies of reason in their methods. They will pretend to know things which they never could have seen or heard of, and for the truth of which they bring forward no evidence; thus forcing the reader to reject, as lacking proper confirmation, what he would else, from its inherent grace or sprightliness, be happy to accept.”

This talisman is a ring, a diamond ring, a very beautiful ring, if you please, but as handled by Mr. Hawthorne a useless and very clumsy piece of machinery. A story-teller's necessary omniscience with all its disadvantages would have served him much

better. The constant juxtaposition and intermixture of commonplace fact and palpable fiction, of moral and philosophical platitudes, uttered in the author's own person, and poetic fancies embodied in the story render the work incongruous, somewhat chaotic, altogether inartistic. This story is emphatically one in which nothing commonplace should be suggested; which, as much as possible, should move independent of trite facts; which should whirl the reader along its own orbit, making him forget essays, homilies, philosophies, realities. The fable itself is fantastic. But it is mixed with matter not at all ideal, quite ponderous and cumbersome, as much out of place as would be a moral, metaphysical, theological, or philosophical disquisition, or an essay on hair in a story of the Arabian Nights spoken by the narrator in her own character. Freed of such matter, more clearly defined and more equably upheld, it would be a stirring and thrilling invention. Now it is rather evidence of undeveloped inventive power than an achievement by such power. The author sometimes rises to a high plane of ingenuity, but, as yet, cannot sustain himself there. He soars, falls fluttering to the earth, soars again, and again descends. It is a hopeful sign that he sometimes seems to be conscious of this deficiency of strength; not hopeful that he resorts to weak and unfit devices to conceal it. When he envelops his tale in a fog, throws around it the mystery of obscurity, even endeavors to excite terror spite of all his assurances

that there is nothing supernatural in his world, brings forward a character shrouded in a mist and says: look out! probably this may be the devil! he displays rather than conceals weakness. When he, even at the end, leaves the reader in doubt as to the parentage of Gnulemah, forces him to search back for hints obscurely thrown out relative to a substitution of children, makes such substitution more doubtful by the improbability that a father would not observe the difference between his own and another child at the age of one year, keeps the whole thing on the verge of incomprehensibility, he excites discontent rather than satisfaction. And the matter is aggravated by the unlikely bewilderment, not to say stupidity, of the bank president, the fogginess through which the author has seen fit to make such insinuations as he deemed sufficient in regard to the fraudulent exchange of babies.

The author's carelessness or hardihood in writing out his story corresponds to the cleverness or boldness of his conceptions. The action of his drama passes twenty years ago. It is related to-day. And speaking as of to-day, the writer says,—

“Whoever has been in Boston remembers, or has seen, the old Beacon Hill Bank, which stood, not on Beacon Hill, indeed, but in that part of School Street now occupied by the City Hall.”

The City Hall mentioned was placed where it is certainly not much less than twenty years ago, and

whoever has been in Boston only since then can neither have seen nor remember the old Beacon Hill Bank.

Of boldness, recklessness, want of discrimination, and bad taste in the use of words, the following citations will suffice as an illustration :

“Seems, as we speak, we glimpse his majestic figure.”

“But sometimes—as now—let him glimpse the truth.”

“On getting out of the harbor she steamed into a bank of solid fog,” and must have stuck fast for a time, although it does not appear that she carried away even her bowsprit by the shock, for she “only got out of it the next morning.”

“The voice replied, with a subdued gusto.”

What kind of a voice is that which replies with a subdued relish of anything?

“For his Berserker blood, which boiled only at heaven-and-hell temperature.”

From this expression it would be inferred that the temperatures of heaven and of hell are at the same degree, which is unquestionably heterodox ; or that the temperature at which Berserker blood boils is that mean heat which would be obtained by a thorough intermixture of the caloric existing in both regions.

“During which the old fellow closely scrutinized his intending passenger from head to foot.”

If this person was "intending" to be, he was not yet a "passenger;" if he was already a "passenger" he was not "intending" to become one.

"Quantities of red granite and many blocks of precious marbles were understood to be using in the work."

Using what?

"Scarce two minutes since their meeting, yet perhaps a large proportion of their lives had meanwhile been charmed away."

Here the author commits the vulgar error of using "proportion" in the sense of portion. If in the last citation the word "proportion" receives its proper meaning, the whole sentence becomes nonsense.

"Balder knew not what to make of the look she gleamed at him."

Here gleam, like glimpse, as cited above, is used as an active verb.

"'Hatred!' repeated Gnulemah, dislikingly; 'hatred,—what is it?'"

"'It is within possibility for a man to believe himself wicked, while his actual conduct is ridiculously blameless, even praiseworthy!'"

Which is equivalent to saying that blamelessness may be worthy of ridicule—certainly an immoral sentiment.

Instead of a calm and simple diction most apt to give an air of truth to his fiction, and impose upon the reader the effect of candor, the author's style is often turgid, frequently strained:

“His soul—his own no longer—was bestridden by a frantic demon, who, brimming over with hot glee, drove him whirling blindly on, with an ever-growing purpose that surcharged each smallest artery, and furnished a condensed dart of malice wherewith to stab and stab again the opposing soul.”

“One tires of the best society, uncondimented with an occasional foreign relish, even of doubtful digestibility.”

The injudicious use of a violent ellipsis sometimes shocks the sensitive reader :

“He was more true than had he tried to be so.”

“But there is ever a warning voice for who will listen.”

In spite of its many and glaring faults and its obvious deficiencies, the book is one that promises much for its author in the future, if he will but develop, strengthen, master his powers. He has the disposition of an artist ; let him become one. The very attempt at what, this time, he has but partially achieved, namely, a well-told fantastic tale, original and novel, is itself praiseworthy and encouraging. He has a strong imagination which wants discipline ; some logical force, which needs strengthening. He has a poetic fancy which should be placed under the guidance of good judgment. As it stands, his story is interesting ; some parts of it to an uncommon degree. He can make a good simile :

“‘The weight that made it fall is of the earth,’ said Balder (both he and Gnulemah had been watching the petal’s course). ‘The breeze that buoyed it up was from heaven, and so it is with man. Were there no heavenly support,

he would fall at once, but whether or not, he always tends to fall.' ”

He sometimes states clearly a profound truth :

“ Properly speaking, there is no mystery about men, but only a great dulness and lethargy in our perceptions of them. The secret of the universe is no more a secret than is the answer to a school-boy’s problem. A mathematician will draw you a triangle and a circle, and show you the trigonometrical science latent therein. But a profounder mathematician would do as much with the equation $man!$ ”

He is able to give a good, graphic, glowing description of a pretty girl :

“ Hereupon was heard within a quick rustling movement; the curtain was thrust aside, and a youthful woman issued forth amongst the warm plants. She was within a few feet of Balder Helwyse before seeming to realize his presence. She caught herself motionless in an instant. The sparkle of laughter in her eye sank in a black depth of wonder. Her eyes filled themselves with Balder as a lake is filled with sunshine; and he, the man of the world and philosopher, could only return her gaze in voiceless admiration.

“ Were a face and form of primal perfection to appear among men, might not its divine originality repel an ordinary observer, used to consider beautiful such abortions of the Creator’s design as sin and degeneration have produced? Not easily can one imagine what a real man or woman would look like. Painting nor sculpture can teach us; we must learn, if at all, from living, electric flesh and blood.

“ This young woman was tall and erect with youthful majesty. She stood like the rejoicing upgush of a living fountain. Her contour was subtile with womanly power,—

suggesting the spring of the panther, the glide of the serpent. Warm she seemed from the bosom of nature. One felt from her the influence of trees, the calm of meadows, the high freedom of the blue air, the happiness of hills. She might have been the sister of the sun.

“The moulding finger of God seemed freshly to have touched her face. It was simple and harmonious as a chord of music, yet inexhaustible in its variety. It recalled no other face, yet might be seen in it the germs of a mighty nation, that should begin from her, and among a myriad resemblances evolve no perfect duplicate. No angel’s countenance, but warmest human clay, which must undergo some change before reaching heaven. The Sphinx, before the gloom of her riddle had dimmed her primal joy,—before men vexed themselves to unravel God’s webs from without instead of from within,—might have looked thus; or such perhaps was Iris in the first flush of her divinity,—fresh from him who made her immortally young and fair.

“Balder’s eyes could not frankly hold their own against her gaze of awful simplicity. All he had ever done amiss arose and put him to the blush. Nevertheless, he would not admit his inferiority; instead of dropping his eyes he closed the soul behind them, and sharpened them with a shallow, out-striking light. Without understanding the change, she felt it and was troubled. Loftily majestic as were her form and features, she was feminine to the core,—tender and finely perceptive. The incisive masculine gaze abashed her.”

This passage is one of the most favorable illustrations of the author’s skill, diction, grasp of thought, fancy, which the book affords. He is capable of making himself a successful, possibly a great writer.

MR. MOTLEY'S LATEST HISTORY.

MR. MOTLEY'S last work, published in two volumes, under the title, "The Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland, with a view of the primary causes and movements of the Thirty Years' War," is a historical rather than biographical composition. The author has clearly stated the purpose with which he wrote :

"This work aims at being a political study. I would attempt to exemplify the influence of individual humors and passions—some of them among the highest and others certainly the basest that agitate humanity—upon the march of great events, upon general historical results at certain epochs, and upon the destiny of eminent personages. It may also be not uninteresting to venture a glance into the internal structure and workings of a republican and federal system of government, then for the first time reproduced almost spontaneously upon an extended scale. Perhaps the revelation of some of its defects, in spite of the faculty and vitality struggling against them, may not be without value for our own country and epoch. The system of Switzerland was too limited and homely, that of Venice too purely oligarchical, to have much moral for us now, or to render a study of their pathological phenomena especially instructive. The lessons taught us by the history of the Netherland Confederacy may have more permanent meaning.

“Moreover, the character of a very considerable statesman at an all-important epoch, and in a position of vast responsibility, is always an historical possession of value to mankind. That of him who furnishes the chief theme for these pages has been either overlooked and neglected or perhaps misunderstood by posterity. History has not too many really important and emblematic men on its records to dispense with the memory of Barneveld, and the writer therefore makes no apology for dilating somewhat fully upon his life-work by means of much of his entirely unpublished and long-forgotten utterances.”

These utterances, the secret correspondence of Barneveld, letters of kings, princes, ambassadors, and agents, State papers and other documents, remain, for the most part, out of the common reach in the archives of Holland. They are unprinted; till within a short time they were wholly inaccessible, and have rarely been read. The documents relating to Barneveld's trial, if the proceeding against him immediately before his death can be deemed worthy of this designation, were for a long time hidden from all eyes. The persons who were appointed to judge him bound themselves by an oath to bury the record of their transactions out of sight. That they had reason to be ashamed of their work and to wish the manner of it to be forgotten is plainly enough shown by the documents themselves, a small portion of which have been published by the Historical Society of Utrecht. Mr. Motley has had free access to the archives, gives many extracts therefrom and a synop-

sis of Barneveld's examination sufficiently explicit to make clear the iniquity of the Commissioners. The testimony which the author has thus given to the world is a valuable contribution to the history of a deeply interesting period.

In a general way it has long been known that the Grand Pensionary and Advocate of Holland was a profound lawyer, a pure patriot, a great statesman, and a trustful Christian. Mr. Motley's work, or rather some portions of it, bring the reader into more intimate relations with the much-calumniated hero—for hero he was, consistent, persevering, undaunted. Through his secret correspondence the private character of the man, the operations of his mind, the aspirations of his heart, the prophetic forecast and great scope of his powerful intellect are advantageously displayed.

"The ever-teeming brain, the restless almost omnipresent hand, the fertile pen, the eloquent and ready tongue, were seen, heard, and obeyed by the great European public, by the monarchs, statesmen, and warriors of the time, at many critical moments of history, but it was not John of Barneveld that spoke to the world. Those 'high and puissant lords my masters the States-General' personified the young but already majestic republic. Dignified, draped, and concealed by that overshadowing title the informing and master spirit performed its never-ending task.

"Those who study the enormous masses of original papers in the archives of the country will be amazed to find how the penmanship, most difficult to decipher, of the Ad-

vocate meets them at every turn. Letters to monarchs, generals, ambassadors, resolutions of councils, of sovereign assemblies, of trading corporations, of great Indian companies, legal and historical disquisitions of great depth and length on questions agitating Europe, constitutional arguments, drafts of treaties among the leading powers of the world, instructions to great commissions, plans for European campaigns, vast combinations covering the world, alliances of empire, scientific expeditions and discoveries—papers such as these, covered now with the satirical dust of centuries, written in the small, crabbed, exasperating characters which make Barneveld's handwriting almost cryptographic, were once, when fairly engrossed and sealed with the great seal of the haughty burgher-aristocracy, the documents which occupied the close attention of the Cabinets of Christendom."

The principal title of the work is a misnomer; since the author says very little of the first sixty years of the Advocate's life, contenting himself with stating some general facts and a reference to what has been said of the great statesman in his "former publications devoted to Netherland history;" with an occasional glance also into the last years of the sixteenth century for some thread which he desires to take up. He gives a general history of events in Europe with which Barneveld was in some way connected during the last ten years of his career, as well as those which more or less immediately forecast and precipitated his fate; those, also, which made clear the Advocate's political prescience. In a competent work professedly giving a general his-

tory of Europe from 1609 to 1619 Barneveld could not fail to be one of the central and strongest figures. In Mr. Motley's essay he is hardly more than this. Of this fact, and of this impracticability of separating his story from that of European politics and wars, the author seems to have been fully conscious.

"In a picture of the last decade of Barneveld's eventful life his personality may come more distinctly forward perhaps than in previous epochs. It will however be difficult to disentangle a single thread from the great historical tapestry of the Republic and of Europe in which his life and achievements are interwoven. He was a public man in the fullest sense of the word, and without his presence and influence the record of Holland, France, Spain, Britain, and Germany might have been essentially modified."

The convention by which Spain virtually acknowledged the independence of the Dutch Republic, and concluded with it a truce of twelve years, was signed in the spring of 1609. At this point, when, as has been intimated, Barneveld was more than sixty years old, Mr. Motley takes up the story. At least a quarter part of the whole work is chiefly occupied with the doings of Henry IV. of France during the last year of his existence, from the spring of 1609 to the 14th of May, 1610; or rather "Henry of France and Navarre—soldier, statesman, wit; above all, a man and every inch a king"—is the foremost personage on the scene, while the voice of Barneveld as

prompter is heard from time to time. Contrasted with this personage, who could justly say of himself in naming the three things which caused him to speak freely to the Ambassadors of the States-General, "I am a great king, and I say what I choose," is the little James I. of England, while other kings, emperors, princes, dukes, electors, generals, churchmen, ambassadors, prepare their respective subordinate parts for the great tragedy of the Thirty Years' War. From his post of observation, the Advocate swept the scene which was bounded by the horizon of Europe, and with clear foresight, consummate diplomatic skill, and untiring perseverance, sought so to arrange, oppose, and control the personages as to bring to such a catastrophe as should most conduce to civil and religious freedom the drama about to begin.

"It was obvious to Barneveld that the issue of the Cleve-Jülich affair, and of the tremendous religious fermentation in Bohemia, Moravia, and Austria, must sooner or later lead to an immense war. It was inevitable that it would devolve upon the States to sustain their great though vacillating, their generous though encroaching, their sincere though most irritating, ally. And yet, thoroughly as Barneveld had mastered all the complications and perplexities of the religious and political question, carefully as he had calculated the value of the opposing forces which were shaking Christendom, deeply as he had studied the characters of Matthias and Rudolph, of Charles of Denmark and Ferdinand of Gratz, of Anhalt and Maxi-

milian, of Brandenburg and Neuburgh, of James and Philip, of Paul V. and Charles Emmanuel, of Sully and Villeroy, of Salisbury and Bacon, of Lerma and Infantado; adroitly as he could measure, weigh, and analyze all these elements in the great problem which was forcing itself on the attention of Europe—there was one factor with which it was difficult for this austere republican, this cold, unsusceptible statesman, to deal: the intense and imperious passion of a graybeard for a woman of sixteen.”

The history of this imperious passion is too romantic to be passed over lightly by the biographer of Barneveld. Its effect was undoubtedly to give the Advocate much annoyance and trouble, to render the great king indecisive, apparently capricious, hard to manage, or to hold firmly to a prescribed course. Further than this it does not appear to have had any direct bearing on the life or the fate of Barneveld. The death of Henry was certainly a great calamity to the cause which he so loyally supported. But it is far from certain that this imperious passion had any influence upon that event. Other independent and more potent causes were aiming at the accomplishment of this crime. Yet the author lingers over the love of Henry for Margaret Montmorency, and the intrigues, adventures, quarrels, and political combinations and ruptures which it produced, as if loth to leave so sentimental a subject for the dryer details of diplomatic contests, religious animosities, and personal hatreds which followed after, in which the last years of the Advocate's life

were passed, and by which he was finally overwhelmed. In spite of all his folles, the manliness and kingliness of Henry plainly exercised a fascination on the author which led him to enter more largely into this, to the ordinary reader, most interesting portion of his work, than his avowed purpose seemed to warrant; unless his chief purpose was "to exemplify the influence of individual humors and passions upon the march of great events," and not to write the story of the life and death of John of Barneveld. Still, the reader is never for a long time permitted to be unconscious of the mighty though invisible presence of the Dutch statesman. His untiring spirit, his penetrating genius, are to be found or felt constantly at work in every political centre, at the sources of power, at the springs of policy, secretly or openly, with a purpose veiled or clearly revealed, as circumstances or the astuteness or stupidity of those with whom he had to deal seemed to demand. But however clothed, this purpose was noble, unchanged, pressed forward persistently and with consummate skill.

While Barneveld is thus employed behind the scenes, the more theatric personages and puppets are fuming, lolling, colliding upon the stage, making many blunders, and giving the prompter infinite trouble, borne with never-failing patience. Among these personages is one of powerful stature, who comes more and more into view till he dominates the scene and dictates the catastrophe, namely, Mau-

rice of Nassau. Francis. Aeersens, busy, skilful, unscrupulous, a visibly efficient actor under the Advocate's instructions during the first acts, retires as Barneveld comes personally upon the stage, and subtly uses all his skill, sharpened by hatred, to destroy the man who had opened the way for and made him great. It is a sad commentary on human nature, the rewards of friendship and of faithful well doing, that Barneveld may be said to have received his death blows from the two men for whom he had done most, and who were each capable of justly estimating his labors, his disinterestedness, and his loyalty.

Perhaps in nothing more than in his persistent negotiations with the King of Great Britain was the Advocate's admirable temper, far-seeing statesmanship, and inexhaustible patience manifested: "He had to deal on the most dangerous and delicate topics of state with a prince who trembled at danger and was incapable of delicacy; to show respect for a character that was despicable, to lean on a royal word falser than water, to inhale almost daily the effluvia from a court compared to which the harem of Henry was a temple of vestals. The spectacle of the slobbering James among his Kars and Hays and Villierses and other minions is one at which history covers her eyes and is dumb; but the republican envoys, with instructions from a Barneveld, were obliged to face him daily, concealing their disgust, and bowing reverentially before him as one

of the arbiters of their destinies and the Solomon of his epoch."

In sketching the wide-spread picture of what was going forward in Europe during these last ten years of Barneveld, his historian seems to have stood rather too near the canvas; so near that his vision did not continuously grasp all that was passing at the same time. Hence some advancing and retreating, some repetitions, some faults of arrangement. At any rate it is conceivable that the transactions, essentially dramatic in themselves, might have been more dramatically presented. Sometimes confusion of dates is apparent, of which the most notable example is in the following passage:

"The discomfited Leopold swept back at the head of his mercenaries, 9000 foot and 3000 horse, through Alsace and along the Danube to Linz, and so to Prague, marauding, harrying, and blackmailing the country as he went. He entered the city on the 15th of February 1611, fighting his way through crowds of exasperated burghers. Sitting in full harness on horseback in the great square before the cathedral, the warlike bishop compelled the population to make oath to him as the Emperor's commissary. The street fighting went on however day by day, poor Rudolph meantime cowering in the Hradschin. On the third day, Leopold, driven out of the town, took up a position on the heights, from which he commanded it with his artillery. Then came a feeble voice from the Hradschin, telling all men that these Passau marauders and their Episcopal chief were there by the Emperor's orders. The triune city—the old, the new, and the Jew—was bid-

den to send deputies to the palace and accept the imperial decrees. No deputies came at the bidding. The Bohemians, especially the Praguers, being in the great majority Protestants knew very well that Leopold was fighting the cause of the Papacy and Spain in Bohemia as well as in the duchies.

“And now Matthias appeared upon the scene. The Estates had already been in communication with him, better hopes, for the time at least, being entertained from him than from the flaccid Rudolph. Moreover a kind of compromise had been made in the autumn between Matthias and the Emperor after the defeat of Leopold in the duchies. The real king had fallen at the feet of the nominal one by proxy of his brother Maximilian. Seven thousand men of the army of Matthias now came before Prague under command of Colonitz. The Passauers, receiving three months’ pay from the Emperor, marched quietly off. Leopold disappeared for the time.”

The date of the action mentioned in the last lines of the above citation, as set down in the margin, is October 9, 1610, more than four months before Leopold had reached that city, according to the date first given. This excursion to Prague and the Hradschin might seem foreign to the purpose and scope of the work, and it might appear that the author had become interested in Leopold during the residence of that personage in the duchies, and was by him led astray, were it not that he designed, under the title which he has chosen, to give a general history of the preparations for and the first movements in the Thirty Years’ War, indicate its causes, mar-

shal the opposing forces, and show the broad expanse of its field ; in short, to make this "the necessary introduction to that concluding portion of his labors which he has always desired to lay before the public; a History of the Thirty Years' War."

The distinguished historian's love of vivacity and variety sometimes leads him to give the unlearned reader unnecessary trouble by rendering some personage indefinite through the use of different designations for the same potentate ; as, for instance, in calling a character Ferdinand of Styria in one place, and Ferdinand of Gratz in another. Occasionally the name is changed, as in the case of a certain Count first mentioned as Hohenzollen, and afterward as Zollen. If these are trifling they are certainly unnecessary faults. At rare intervals the author's diction indicates carelessness or haste in writing. But in the main his style is excellent, judiciously varied according to the changing character of the narrative. His reflections, deductions, and commentaries concerning the events recorded are well placed, concise, and significant. What he says about the feelings of an ill-used ambassador will be read with interest :

"It is no wonder that the Ambassador was galled to the quick by the outrage which those concerned in the Government were seeking to put upon him. How could an honest man fail to be overwhelmed with rage and anguish at being dishonored before the world by his masters for scrupulously doing his duty, and for maintaining the rights and dignity of his own country? He knew that the charges were but

pretexts, that the motives of his enemies were as base as the intrigues themselves, but he also knew that the world usually sides with the Government against the individual, and that a man's reputation is rarely strong enough to maintain itself unsullied in a foreign land when his own Government stretches forth its hand not to shield, but to stab, him."

To a statesman the period embraced in this work is truly a very interesting and important study; most of all to a republican statesman, illustrating, as it does in the case of the United Provinces, the absolute necessity of a government which shall act, especially in times of peace and prosperity, as a cohesive principle, uniting every individual citizen to every other, strong enough to resist the restlessness, selfishness, party spirit, personal animosities, imaginary wrongs, which never fail to become active and aggressive so soon as any great common danger, or common interest, ceases to impel all the inhabitants toward a common centre and a common union for protection; that is, to make individual selfishness a common bond. Had our own statesmen of revolutionary times sufficiently studied the political history of the United Netherlands it is inconceivable that they would have made the error committed in attempting to put into successful practice the Articles of Confederation, thus in effect repeating an experiment which so shortly before had led only to a series of crimes and disasters so soon as the outside pressure of foreign enemies was withdrawn by the establish-

ment of the twelve years' truce. The author does, indeed, prolong his work somewhat beyond that period, in order to comprise in this narrative the immediate consequences of Barneveld's death, such as the conspiracy of his sons, their fate, the Roman-like nobility of his wife, and the escape of Grotius. Leaving the war at the commencement, he narrows the scope of vision till it embraces only that which immediately concerned the great Advocate, his family, and his intimate friends. Truly, the old man's end nobly crowned his work. Grandly did he meet his accusers, and grandly bear himself to the close. Such conduct was to be expected from one of whom the historian with apparent truth and justice speaks as follows :

"No man can thoroughly understand the complication and procession of phenomena attending the disastrous dawn of the renewed war, on an even more awful scale than the original conflict in the Netherlands, without studying the correspondence of Barneveld. The history of Europe is there. The fate of Christendom is there. The conflict of elements, the crash of contending forms of religion and of nationalities, is pictured there in vivid if homely colors. The Advocate, while acting only in the name of a slender confederacy, was in truth, so long as he held his place, the prime minister of European Protestantism. There was none other to rival him, few to comprehend him, fewer still to sustain him.

* * * * *

"The warnings and the lamentations of Barneveld sound

to us out of that far distant time like the voice of an inspired prophet. It is possible that a portion of the wrath to come might have been averted had there been many men in high places to heed his voice. I do not wish to exaggerate the power and wisdom of the man, nor to set him forth as one of the greatest heroes of history. But posterity has done far less than justice to a statesman and sage who wielded a vast influence at a most critical period in the fate of Christendom, and uniformly wielded it to promote the cause of temperate human liberty, both political and religious. Viewed by the light of two centuries and a half of additional experience, he may appear to have made mistakes, but none that were necessarily disastrous or even mischievous. Compared with the prevailing idea of the age in which he lived, his schemes of polity seem to dilate into larger dimensions, his sentiments of religious freedom, however limited to our modern ideas, mark an epoch in human progress, and in regard to the general commonwealth of Christendom, of which he was so leading a citizen, the part he played was a lofty one. No man certainly understood the tendency of his age more exactly, took a broader and more comprehensive view than he did of the policy necessary to preserve the largest portion of the results of the past three-quarters of a century, or had pondered the relative value of great conflicting forces more skilfully. Had his counsels been always followed; had illustrious birth placed him virtually upon a throne, as was the case with William the Silent, and thus allowed him occasionally to carry out the designs of a great mind with almost despotic authority, it might have been better for the world."

A LITERARY CURIOSITY.

IF Mr. John Walker Vilant Macbeth has any enemies let them rejoice, for he hath written a book, and its title is, "The Might and Mirth of Literature." It is a work which one may read without any tiresome exercise of judgment or discrimination. The author tells you what you must think of it. Here is his "Introductory Notice:"

"The object of this volume is to create and fully equip a new branch of study; to discuss Figures of Speech far more thoroughly than ever has been done; to urge upon pleaders, preachers, and all who write or speak English, many very important practical advices; to comment specially on Shakespeare, Milton, Demosthenes, and the Bible; to present a wide review of American and English literature; and to make the whole subject as amusing and laughter-exciting as it is instructive. Also, we have availed ourselves of our familiarity with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; and with four of the modern languages, French, German, Italian and Spanish."

And here is a part of his "Introduction:"

"This volume will thus possess strict artistic and scientific unity. Besides—and of this assertion the severest scrutiny is challenged, the affirmation being very venture-

some and improbable—the author avers that this plan of his has the merit, even at this late day, of the most entire originality; never before has figurative language been taken as a point from which to examine a whole literature.

“This volume claims to be of the greatest value in studying language and literature, and of special use to all public speakers—for instance, to clergymen and to lawyers.”

Throughout his book this author makes very frequent mention of the Bible, and references to it, to the figures of speech to be found therein, and to their important bearing on theological and other questions. But in his practice he seems not to have been guided by the teachings of one of these figures, and indeed he appears entirely to have neglected it, namely: “Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.” No Philistine giant or Homeric hero ever boasted more loudly or more pleonastically when engaging in a gentle and joyous bout with a deadly enemy, than does Mr. Macbeth when he begins to slash around among “Front cuts, Middle cuts, End cuts,” and, according to his catalogue, one hundred and twenty-two other figures. The murderous Thane of Cawdor, the first known end cutter of the same family name, was far from being a match for him. While still in his introduction he says,—

“You cannot too soon form a very high opinion of the many high qualities of the one syllabled words of our tongue. The quickest way to get into such an opinion is

for each reader to go a-botanizing, and form a herbarium of at least a hundred such lines. Exquisitely will you be rewarded. We have collected a few. Your gathering of a hundred of them will, of itself, entitle you to be named a person of exquisite taste; while you will have in your possession a pellucid fountain of enjoyment the most refined."

Then follow nineteen examples of such lines. Fourteen of these examples are cited from such writers as Leigh Hunt, Byron, Heywood, Wild, Chaucer, Shakspeare, Milton, Moir, Tennyson, Campbell, and Sir Philip Sidney; five of them are from the author's own poetry, of which two samples are quoted below:

"God wept! The tear He shed, its name was Christ."

"As far at sea is seen a peak of And,
Its base in cloud, but o'er its top the sun;
So God, though wrapt in dusk, yet crowned with Christ!
And so we're sure, as Love's great day rolls on,
The clouds will lift, and vales of Prime be shown."

If you look at the index you will find in its alphabetical place the following:

"Author of this volume gives us twenty-one bits of poesy;" with due reference to the several pages on which these choice bits may be found. They are introduced by such phrases as these:

"In the subjoined, the author of this volume concludes with 'suage for assuage;' 'Your author lays before you this, from an address to the aged;' 'Your author presumes to

intrude on you an instance and more than one;’ ‘Your author inflicts on you an instance;’ ‘Permit us to cool our indignation by launching a moment, like Addison’s man and horse, into “a strain,” one of our own.’ ‘We close our discussion of the metaphor with “The Three Mourners,” translated by us from the German of Charmissa, and never presented in English before. In this translation we claim the whole of the metaphor in line eighteenth;’ ‘We take leave of metonymy, this elegant department of our subject, by giving a specimen of our own;’ ‘From the Italian of Giambatista Volpe permit your author to translate for you the following sonnet;’ ‘Your author inflicts on you both classes’ [of epithets]; ‘Your author ventures;’ ‘Or again, your author, translating from the Spanish;’ ‘Your author supplies an instance:’ ‘Let your author inflict on you these lines, that close with front rhyme;’ ‘Or condescend to read from your author;’ ‘We close with an allusion of our own;’ ‘We foist on our audience an instance of our own;’ ‘Permit us to fancy that a pulpit orator, after a vehement storm of appeal against vices, paused into a whisper and said;’ ‘Permit your author one little liberty more; he, if little in reason, is abundant in rhyme!’ ‘We exclaim in our own words.’

Mr. Macbeth esteems his work more immediately under consideration quite as highly as he does his poesy, and he loses no opportunity to express his opinion :

“‘Let the reader of this volume, who is wise enough to strive to be a student of it.’ ‘This chapter is by far the most complete treatment of metonymy the world has ever seen.’ ‘This is the fullest treatise on tropes that ever the

English or any literature has seen.' 'We have now enumerated seventeen kinds of repetition. No such minute specification has been made in any modern literature. But we hasten to wind up this subject with a specimen from our studies in those four admirable modern languages to which we have given many a year's attention.' 'This volume, which we present to them, is really the only book in the world in which the public speaker can find his war-gear described.' 'To pray to God with Aristotle and Demosthenes, as in the course of our studies we have naturally come on them doing.' 'Grant to us now one other indulgence—of availing ourselves of our familiarity with the noble and melodious Spanish literature.' 'Laying before you an example, translated by us from the French of Victor Hugo.' 'Our professional occupation brings Old Homer before us so continually that we are led to think of epithets almost every hour of the day.' 'This quality of style we are constrained to urge upon you from our long and so minute study of Shakespeare, the inimitable.' 'Befittingly we close with a sweet strain from the Spanish on Peace, which we translate for you.' 'At last to our concluding figure have we come; claiming, on the one hand, that the treatment of our subject is by far the fullest discussion it has ever received.'

Is not this mirth provoking? Are you not convinced that this book is at least worthy of the second half of its title? Can you not already clearly perceive that the author has accomplished one of his avowed purposes, and made his work "as amusing and laughter-exciting as it is instructive?" The book, as a matter of fact, is so fascinatingly bad —.

Bad? You say it makes frequent references to the Bible, and surely the author's poesy is of a religious kind. True, and that is one reason why the work is likely to do mischief, especially to a certain class of young writers whose style is yet to be formed, and who are eagerly looking for guidance. Some persons of little knowledge and great faith believe that a man who quotes the sacred Scriptures and talks against Popery and atheism can err in no respect; that his style must be a model, his taste faultless, his reasoning unanswerable, his judgment infallible. And yet there are such men who are safe guides in nothing. Now, the author of this volume, which, according to his assertion, possesses "strict artistic and scientific unity," leaves his prescribed limits time and again to rush at transubstantiation, and to show that "the correct doctrine of metaphor sweeps the doctrine of transubstantiation out of the Scriptures," repeating his arguments and assertions over and over. In a like way he breaks all artistic bounds to enter into discussions of other theological questions, and attempts to establish that "synecdoché scatters the error that the Redeemer is destitute of a human soul," and "how thoroughly it proves a bulwark against heresy, even." Or he assails atheism without any reference to the promised "strict artistic and scientific unity" of his work, declaring, among other things, that "atheism dwarfs men; dwarfs, beclouds everything; disintellects the universe; dries literature into sandy dust."

Lest any person should mistake the motive of these remarks, let it be said that we have nothing to urge in favor of transubstantiation, that we cannot understand how any fairly well balanced and healthy man can be an atheist, and that we regard the Bible with quite as much veneration as does Mr. Macbeth himself. That very book, however, teaches that there is a time for all things; and the time for hurling sectarian dogmas at religious opponents does not coincide with that set apart for the "artistic and scientific" study of figures of speech. Animadversions upon these and very many other matters, pleas for the scriptures, for Protestantism, for poetry, for an improved translation of the Bible, denunciations of dull preachers, of unbelievers, of free thinkers, of tenets of the Roman Catholic Church, which he repeats again and again without any regard for the congruity of his discourse, the intelligence or the patience of his readers, occupy many of his pages, and swell the book to a discouraging size. As an example of how these extraneous themes are introduced, read the following:

"By the time this page has been reached, every reader feels the vast importance of our subject. Think of the great historical words: 'This is my body.' Ah, the tens of thousands slaughtered for transubstantiation! According to Protestantism and the laws of metaphor, 'this' is literal; 'body' is literal; 'is' stands for 'represents'—a sense emphatically given, which it has thousands of times. According to the priests, 'this' is literal; 'body' is literal; 'is'

stands for 'is changed into'—a sense it never has. Which of the two parties is the *more literal*? Our subject holds within it such truths, laws, applications, as would, by God's blessing, have saved to the earth much of the most precious blood; and tortures so dire in their cruelty, so cowardly in the circumstances of their infliction, that at the recollection of them history blushes. Is our subject trivial, then? Degraded so long by lame, shallow, unphilosophical handling!"

Although the author takes care to say, from time to time, that figures of speech must be the natural outgrowth and expression of thoughts and emotions, yet he so eulogizes the various figures of which he treats as to create an impression on an inexperienced reader that each figure has in itself some wonderful power and beauty, even when used artificially and arbitrarily.

"Give five or six days to such an examination of the effect in his (Shakespeare's) hands of front-cuts, mid-cuts, and end-cuts, and you will be astonished at the superb uses which a master can make of even the minutest and most opposite dexterities of diction."

"This line feels to us unsurpassable. Please make a study of it. It owes a very great deal to the humble aid of front-cut. We have not words to express the refined delight which such usages of language give us. Croon it over at least a hundred and fifty times."

"Enallage is the figure we proceed with—of very great value; the use of one part of speech, or of one modification of a part of speech for another. We lay before you twenty-six varieties, each deserving to rank as a separate

figure. Judge sternly for yourself if they lead you not deep, and with a Venus-like hand, into the inmost recesses of this vast forest which we call language. The following is the fullest account of enallage that has ever appeared. Gather out of Scripture two hundred varieties—a feast of strawberries for your own private eating; and then a hundred cases of each individual sort.”

The only thing in the work likely to counteract such erroneous impression effectually is the author’s style, especially when he embellishes it with specimens of the figures which he has under consideration at the time :

“This use of one case for another struts about in the literary realm by no less a name than XXIX., Antiptosis. What dignity doth a Greek work of four syllables give to the matter! By no means was that boy beslapped aware what a classical antiptosian way of speaking was his. So we are informed by the rhetors that XXX., Antemeria, is the use of one part of speech for another; while the use of one form of noun, pronoun, or verb for another is XXXI., Heterasis!”

“Is it always that the snow wreaths lie smooth in the gusty nooks of the hills? Knows little of language he who will deny that words can be whirled even more wildly than snow flakes.”

“Old age by no means so naturally suggests the thought of a picture as it does the thought of the sepulchre, to which the tottering step of Eld is so inevitably drawing near.”

“On the other hand when the first sin volcanoes out its way, Milton tells us with the deepest poetic truth.”

"Mrs. Barbauld, a writer of uncommon vigor, writes of the discomforts of a washing day. Not is it the hand that can be impatient."

"Samuel Lover, another inimitable Irishman, also dealeth sorrowfully in widows."

"Spiritualization deserves mention, however shortly; let us be lubricated by Samuel Fergusson. He speaks of a pretty maid: We see a material object turned to an ethereal use."

"We invite all our readers to take the same reverential position as to the remarkable but very defensible case of Balaam, which we take and defend. Not doth the sacred narrative require us to hold literal speech by the bodily organs and by the intellect of the animal; but speech by an angelic minister, who could speak as easily from an animal's mouth as from any other place. Then weigh our argument from literature and from figures—an argument entirely new."

By this time the reader is probably convinced that this author has very clear instinctive perceptions of what was the real matter with Balaam's ass, how he actually felt, and what he would be likely to do, and what not to do. He seems to have written the book under consideration chiefly from a desire to do some preaching, to display his knowledge, more especially to exhibit his "bits of poesy," and his "familiarity with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and with four of the modern languages, French, German, Italian, and Spanish;" also to make known the scope of his reading, his critical acumen, his ingenuity in detect-

ing and discovering figures of speech, and his ability to instruct all mankind. To make a full exhibition of all his acquisitions, he lugs in a great variety of matter impertinent to his proposed subject, while he fails to discriminate with reasonable nicety between what are and what are not such figures of speech as should properly come within even the widest treatment, and, in some cases, between one figure and another, as when he says, "We have recourse to metaphor when one says, pointing to a portrait on the wall, 'This is Washington,' " where he evidently calls ellipsis by another name. The full sentence would be, "This is a portrait of Washington." But it was important to one of his arguments on the text, "This is my body," and to show how "the correct doctrine of metaphor sweeps the doctrine of transubstantiation out of the Scriptures," that he should make "is" in both cases mean "represents." The reader will perceive that the author has made ostentatious show of extensive reading, but he will also find reason to suspect that no small part of his citations and of the comments upon them were taken at second hand; and when he comes to the passage of the work quoted below he will doubt the writer's accuracy:

"Metathesis next claims attention, or twisting, usually at the bidding of humor, of the letters of a word into some different order of arrangement. You will detect it in the following four pathetic lines by Tom Moore, the Irish bard,

wherein he bemoans his destiny, which all of us have shared, in being caught in a heavy shower umbrelliless :

“ ‘ O ever thus, from childhood’s hour,
Has chilling fate upon me fell ;
There always comes a soaking shower
When I hain’t got an umberell.’ ”

And when, after a citation of some lines from a poem made between the years 1360 and 1370, the reader finds the following comment, he is sure that the author does not always use the English language correctly, especially the word “ refers :”

“ In our humble opinion, no more pathetic passage in all our literature ; for it refers to that sore struggle for life which is going on at this hour, in the winter of 1874-75, in New York, the most advanced city of our imperilled civilization.”

And when he perceives that the word “ petite” is used as if it were English, in the following quotation, he will be convinced that the author is so familiar with French that he cannot distinguish it from his own language, and will therefore abstain from assaulting him violently because of his blundering pedantry and bad taste :

“ The Rev. William Lisle Bowles is still remembered by a petite volume of sonnets, only fourteen in number, highly finished, but possessing little force.”

Mr. Macbeth writes as might a man who had been for a long time the pedagogue or preacher of a com-

paratively ignorant community, where, from the fact that all those whom he was accustomed to meet were unlearned, he had towered above his fellows, and by common consent had passed for Sir Oracle ; a man who had received some knowledge of the classics, as taught in our colleges, and possibly had made them more familiar by subsequent study, followed as a matter of taste or professional occupation ; and who had also some acquaintance with standard and popular English literature, especially with certain reviews and collections of witticisms ; yet who in all other respects possessed little knowledge other than such as could be obtained within the four walls of a moderately well-stored library.

It is needless to make further quotations from this book in order to show that its author's style is about as bad as it can be ; or to make manifest the fact that he is a very vicious guide in matters of rhetorical taste and propriety. Among the figures which he enumerates are many which he truly says have never before been discovered and known as such ; and it is safe to prophesy that, except so far as his light extends, they will remain in the obscurity where they have hitherto been. He shows a notable want of such analytical and discriminating power as was absolutely necessary to the successful accomplishment of his plan, even had his plan not transcended the practical, not to say the possible. Mixed in the mass of undigested matter which he has brought together in this volume are some sound

maxims and much material that a skilful rhetorician might use with profit in making a really "artistic and scientific" work on figurative language. But with all its present contents, and with its present want of form, arrangement, and elimination, "The Might and Mirth of Literature" is chiefly valuable as a literary curiosity.

A RUSSIAN NOVELIST.

THE novels of Ivan Sergheïevitch Turgénieff, of which some translations have been published in this country, have made that writer's name familiar to many intelligent readers on this side of the Atlantic. So little are Russian life and character comprehended by us that these works have, in some way, the nature of a revelation. This gentleman is the only author of that nationality whose writings have become known here to any considerable number of persons. It is, indeed, true that twenty or thirty years ago a story by Lermontoff, entitled "A Hero of Our Time," was found to be strangely fascinating, and not altogether wholesome, by a few students of foreign literature, who were fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to read it. But no wide or lasting impression was left by this melancholy tale as a literary product of Russia. Consequently, Turgénieff is likely, in general estimation, to be held as exceptional and isolated among his people, far above them all in genius and refinement, and the only one who has made his way into the world of letters. And yet this notion is altogether erroneous, as is well known to the few students who have made

themselves intimately acquainted with Russian history, and particularly with the history and condition of literature in that country. It is a fact, however, that, in the judgment of well-informed critics, the author under immediate consideration stands at the head of writers of fiction in his native language, while his works most favorably represent that class of Russian literature.

Mr. Turgénieff was born in 1818 of noble parents, in easy circumstances, and was educated at home, at the schools of Moscow, at the University of St. Petersburg, and at Berlin, whither he went at the age of twenty years to continue his studies, chiefly in metaphysics, the classics, and history. At the age of twenty-five years he began his literary career by publishing a small volume of poems. He became greatly interested in the welfare of the serfs, and from 1846 to 1851 contributed sketches of serf-life to a literary journal and review of Moscow. These, with some others, were afterwards published in a volume called "Memoirs of a Sportsman." This book awakened an interest and produced an excitement in Russia like that which "Uncle Tom's Cabin" caused in the United States. Turgénieff's book stimulated the tendency towards emancipation, and "its author may justly feel, as he does, that the happiest event of his life was the reading of this book by the present emperor, who himself declared that it was one of the first incitements to the decree which gave freedom to thirty millions of serfs." In 1852 the emperor

Nicholas ordered that Turgénieff be confined to his estate, on account of something in one of his publications at which the government took offence; but he was released after two years through the intercession of the present emperor, then the Crown-prince Alexander. Since that time he has, for the most part, lived in Germany and France.

Seven of this author's tales have been published in this country, enough to furnish data for a tolerably correct estimate of his powers and characteristics as a novel-writer. The interest of his stories is, to an unusual degree, independent of plot. It is chiefly maintained by very vigorous and skilful development and exhibition of characters, by the novelty of the scenes, which are laid in Russia, as well as the manners depicted, which are Russian, and the home-life of Russia which he presents, more especially as it is on the estates of the better portion of the middle class. He shows the subjects and courses of thought aroused by the newly-awakened and increasing desire for greater freedom, for wider education, the action, the civilization, the progress of the western nations: he produces representatives of the different parties of students and strivers, ranging from the man who follows, rather contentedly, the footsteps of his fathers to the woman fully "emancipated."

"The room in which they found themselves looked more like a work-room than a parlor. Papers, letters, many numbers of Russian reviews, whose pages were

generally uncut, lay strewn over the dust-covered tables; ends of half-smoked cigarettes were scattered on all sides. The mistress of the house was reclining on a leathern divan; she was still young, had fair hair somewhat dishevelled, and was dressed in a not-entirely clean silk; a lace handkerchief covered her head, and large bracelets set off her hands, which had very short, blunt fingers. She rose from the divan, and putting negligently over her shoulders a velvet cape, lined with yellowish ermine, she said in a languishing voice to Sitnikof: 'Good morning, Victor,' and shook his hand.

" 'Bazarof, Kirsanof,' he said in an abrupt tone, imitating the manner of Bazarof in introductions.

" 'Be welcome,' replied Madame Kukshin; and fixing on Bazarof her round eyes, between which rose a poor little red pug nose, she added; 'I know you;' and shook his hand also.

"Bazarof made a slight grimace. The insignificant little figure of the emancipated woman had nothing positively ugly; but the expression of her features was disagreeable. You would gladly have asked her, 'What is the matter with you? Are you hungry? Are you tired? Are you afraid of anything? Why these efforts?' She also, like Sitnikof, felt something that continually *scraped*, as it were, her soul. Her movements and her language were at once unconstrained and awkward; she considered herself, doubtless, as a good and simple creature, yet whatever she did, she always seemed to you to have intended doing something else."

Lunch was ordered, and the emancipated woman went on to manifest her liberty and express her sentiments:

"Eudoxia rolled a cigarette between her fingers, which were yellow with tobacco, passed it over her tongue, sucked the end of it and began to smoke. * * * * *

" 'I cannot remain indifferent when women are attacked,' continued Eudoxia; 'it is frightful! frightful! Instead of attacking them, read Michelet's book *De l'Amour*; it is admirable! Gentlemen, let us talk of love,' she added, languishingly letting her hand fall on the shapeless cushion of the divan. A sudden silence followed this appeal. * * * *

"The lunch lasted some time longer. The first bottle of champagne was followed by a second, by a third, and even by a fourth—Eudoxia talked without interruption; Sitnikof kept pace with her. They discussed for some time what marriage was, whether a prejudice or a crime; they examined the question whether men were born with the same dispositions, and in what, properly speaking, individuality consisted. Things came to that point that Eudoxia, her cheeks inflamed with wine, striking with her flattened nails the keys of her discordant piano, began to sing in a hoarse voice first gypsy songs; then the romance of Seymour Shiff; 'Sleeping Grenada Dreams.' Sitnikof, his head turbaned with a scarf, tried to represent the reconciled lover, when the singer pronounced these words:

'And my lips with thine,
Join in burning kisses.'

"Arcadi could no longer restrain himself. 'Gentlemen, he said aloud, 'this begins to remind one somewhat of Bedlam.'"

You see that this author handles a sharp pen; that it makes graphic delineations; that, while it

is one of the readiest and most powerful to promote political freedom, it is as ready and as strong to repress social license. You note that his discernment promptly distinguishes between advancement and eccentric or destructive movements; and you can perceive that the terrible force of his warnings against such movements, as well as in regard to stationary things that should be reformed, consists in the clear, mirror-like pictures which he makes of these things and of these movements. After the same method he vigorously combats the exaggerated notions, the foolhardy plans, the wild theories and practices which find rapid growth among a people repressed by despotism, yet wrought to a condition akin to that of revolution by questions of social and political amelioration.

You may judge of his skill in making portraits from this specimen :

“ A man of middle height, wearing an English suit of a dark color, a low cravat in the latest style, and varnished boots, entered the parlor. It was Paul Petrovitch Kirsanof. He seemed to be about forty-five years old: his gray hair, cut very short, had the brilliant reflection of new silver; his features, of a bilious hue, but clear and without wrinkles, were very regular, and of extreme delicacy of contour. You soon noticed that he had once been very handsome; his eyes, black, clear, and oval, were especially remarkable. The elegant exterior of Paul Petrovitch preserved still the harmony of youth, and his step had a kind of spring that usually disappears after a man is

twenty. Paul Petrovitch took out of his trousers pocket his beautiful hand, with long pink nails, a hand whose beauty was heightened by wristbands of a snowy whiteness, fastened at the wrist by large opals, and extended it to his nephew. After having given him the European 'Shake-hands,' he kissed him three times in the Russian way, that is, he touched his cheek three times with his perfumed moustaches, and said 'Welcome.'

"His brother presented Bazarof to him; he slightly bent his slim body and smiled, but did not extend his hand, and even replaced it in his trousers pocket.

" 'I had begun to believe that you would not arrive to-day,' he said, in a head-voice, of an agreeable pitch, swinging himself with a graceful air, shrugging his shoulders, and showing his handsome white teeth."

Here is another portrait :

"The young Cossack brought the Cognac and some schnapps on a waiter. Urban Ivanovitch took the wineglass from the tray very deliberately, and looked at it for a long while with deep attention, as though he were not quite sure what it was he had in his hand. Then he gazed at the Cossack, and asked him whether Basil was not calling him. He then put on a mournful expression, drank off the Cognac, and began very slowly taking his handkerchief out of his pocket. But the Cossack had already put by the tray and liquor-bottle, eaten what remained of the schnapps, and succeeded in falling asleep, whilst Urban Ivanovitch was still fumbling for his handkerchief, and gazing with the same fixed stare at the window, then at the floor, and finally at the wall."

He exhibits characters with skill as masterly as is that with which he presents likenesses. He seizes their salient points, transfers them to his pages, and makes them manifest after the manner in which they are manifested in actual life. If, to reach these results, he has worked through laborious analysis, he does not trouble you with the process. In his method there is an appearance of artlessness which gives a certain color of truthfulness to what he says, and which, in itself, has a peculiar charm. He seems simply and ingenuously to describe things as he sees them, as if by a kind of intuition. In this way he displays a high order of genius, or a consummate achievement of art; but such artistic achievement demonstrates the possession of genius. This appearance of candid narration is strengthened by occasional mention of what, to us, have the air of trivial and inconsequential incidents. In Russia, however, such mention may, and very likely does, have a local significance.

In each of his stories the leading characters are, generally, well contrasted. They are Russian, interested more or less in questions of public weal, and upon one side or the other of philosophical, metaphysical, or social theories, such as in this country would be commonly called isms. Their discussions of these matters are, however, never long drawn out, never heavy, never wearisome, but terse, pointed, vivacious, attractive. Moreover, they have practical uses, for they serve to display shades and divergen-

cies of character, and, to some extent, they control the catastrophe.

Turgénieff has little to do with such crimes as are known to the law. His men are virtuous, or have such vices as men of the world consider venial. It is with eccentricities or idiosyncrasies that he marks them. Some coquette is his favorite motor. She impels the movement and forces the conclusion. In four out of the seven stories mentioned, a coquette is exhibited as the leading feminine personage. These four women differ from each other in degree rather than in kind. The first is cold, passionless, mischievous, but, so far as appears, decorous. The second breaks off a match, nearly destroys a young man, and is willing to be as bad as she can without losing her position, amusements, and comforts. The third recklessly blights her husband's life and her own reputation, regardless of her child, and drives a pure young girl, broken-hearted, into a convent. You would think her to be as vile as possible did you not read of the fourth, who makes a bet with her husband that she will treat a young man, who is very much enamored of and betrothed to a lovely girl, as Dido treated Æneas when they hunted together; and she wins her bet. In a devilish way she breaks off this match, ruins this man, and makes an innocent and unoffending family wretched. In depicting these characters, the author goes on in regular gradation from bad to worse. Of the three other stories, one describes, among other things, the

conduct of two young women, one of whom is in all respects as bad as either of King Lear's elder daughters, while the other shows every disposition to emulate her sister, and in ingratitude and cruelty is fully her equal. The heroines of the two remaining tales are decent girls, but in love-affairs disobedient to parents, devoted to their lovers, however, and hesitating at no sacrifice. To some extent, indeed, they usurp the lover's place, after the first declaration.

Whether Mr. Turgénieff handles such materials from choice, or from a desire to reform the character of his countrywomen by showing them their own images in a mirror, cannot be determined from anything contained in the works before us. It is, however, charitable to suppose that, in accordance with the disposition heretofore manifested by him in respect to political matters, he desires to bring about moral reforms, and that he is essaying to do this, with regard to a certain portion of his countrywomen, by the method in which he so effectually aided political amelioration. That he has such a purpose can only be inferred from the history of his previous labors and their results. But even admitting this, we cannot believe that he gives anything like a just representation of the Russian women. As a general rule, it is very unsafe as well as very unjust to assume that the characters portrayed by any novelist, always excepting the English, are accurate samples of anything but the smallest

minority of the people from among whom they are supposed to be drawn. It may be that, like our own Hawthorne, he delights to exhibit wrong-doing working out its logical consequences, and that he prefers to expose those crimes which are not technically such, though among the most destructive. A comparison of these two writers has, indeed, been suggested, but, so far as appears from the works more especially under examination, such comparison can hardly be sustained. It is true that Turgénieff shows a marked tendency to deal with morbid sentiments; but he does this as an artist rather than as a philosopher. The more morbid the sentiment the more unusual the character, and the more salient the individuality of the personage. Crime, of some kind, is the motive used by many story-tellers, who are as diverse from Hawthorne as they are from Dr. Watts or Sir Isaac Newton.

This author is practically acquainted with men and things, after the manner of men of the world. He knows society, has learned its lessons, and has felt its inflictions.

"In General Korobine that kindliness which is common to all Russians was enhanced by the special affability which is peculiar to all persons whose fair fame has been a little soiled."

"One unfortunate man immediately and from afar recognizes another, but in old age he is seldom willing to associate with him. Nor is that to be wondered at. He has nothing to share with him—not even hopes."

"Have you ever noticed, dear reader, that people who are very absent-minded in the company of their inferiors, suddenly lose that manner when they enter the society of their superiors? What can be the reason of this? Yet why ask such questions?"

"He talked incessantly, putting questions to himself, and arguing upon them, touching upon now the most elevated, now the most ordinary subjects, and finally so wearied Litvinof that he was on the point of shrieking with despair. For creating a cold and dreary gloom without escape or remedy, Pichtehalkin had not his equal, even among the profound philosophers who possess this faculty in the highest degree. The very appearance of his bold and shiny head, his small eyes, and woefully regular nose, unconsciously gave one the blues, while his slow and monotonous baritone voice seemed made expressly to enunciate in grave and measured tones such sentences as the following: Two and two make four, not three or five; water is a liquid; benevolence is praiseworthy; credit is indispensable to the State as to the individual in financial operations."

Among his personages, but, generally, in subordinate parts, are good and lovely women. Yet, from the characters of those who are the most important to the story, as well as from other indications, you are led to doubt whether he really venerates the more beautiful sex:

"Tell a woman anything honestly and without reserve, and she will have no peace until she has cooked up some petty and foreign motive that explains why you expressed yourself in just that way and no other."

"Do you know what the difference is between the mistakes of men and those of women? You don't know? I will tell you. A man may say, for example, that twice two makes, not four, but five; a woman will say that twice two makes—a wax-candle."

"One day he fell on his knees before a lady whom he hardly knew, but who had wearied him by urging him to taste some little delicacy, and began to beseech her humbly, but with wrath plainly to be seen in his face, to spare him; that he had done nothing to reproach himself with in regard of his conduct to her, and that he would never visit her again. Another time, a horse ran away with one of Daria Michaëlovna's washerwomen down a steep hill, and threw her into a pit, nearly killing her. From that time Pigasoff never spoke of it except as the 'good horse,' and the hill and pit began to seem to him most picturesque places."

"He told her about one of his neighbors who had grown so effeminate by being tied for thirty years to his wife's apron-string, that one day, when stepping over a puddle he, Pigasoff, had seen him put his hands behind him and lift up his coat-tails as women do their skirts."

Russian men fare little better at the hands of this writer than do the women. He does not spare their foibles, their follies, their extravagance. He chastises them for their good, and for the good of their country. You cannot doubt his patriotism. He gives many incidental evidences of it, and, if these do not convince you, note that he plainly declares it:

"Our country can get along without each one of us; but none of us can get along without our country. It is sad

for him who thinks he can, and doubly sad for him who really does forget the manners and ideas of his country. Cosmopolitanism is nonsense, a zero, a less than zero; outside of nationality there is no art, no truth, no life, there is nothing at all. Every ideal figure ought to represent a type, at the risk of at once becoming insignificant and vulgar."

He entertains no sickly sentimentalism. He knows and admits the hard facts, the stern conditions of human existence; furthermore, he accepts them in a truly philosophic spirit:

"Whatever blow may fall upon a human being, he cannot help—reader, forgive the brutality of the phrase—he cannot help eating on that day or the next, and that is the first consolation."

"I think there are only three misfortunes in the world, namely, living in a cold room in winter, wearing tight shoes in summer, and sleeping in the same room with a crying child which one can't whip."

He frequently gives expression to religious feeling, often to conviction, sometimes to doctrine that would not be rejected by the sternest Calvinist:

"Each one of us sins in that he merely lives; nor is there a great thinker or benefactor of humanity, who, by reason of his wisdom or by reason of his goodness, can believe that he has a right to live."

His pathos is unaffected and truly tender. Witness the aged father and mother at the grave of their skeptical and only son:

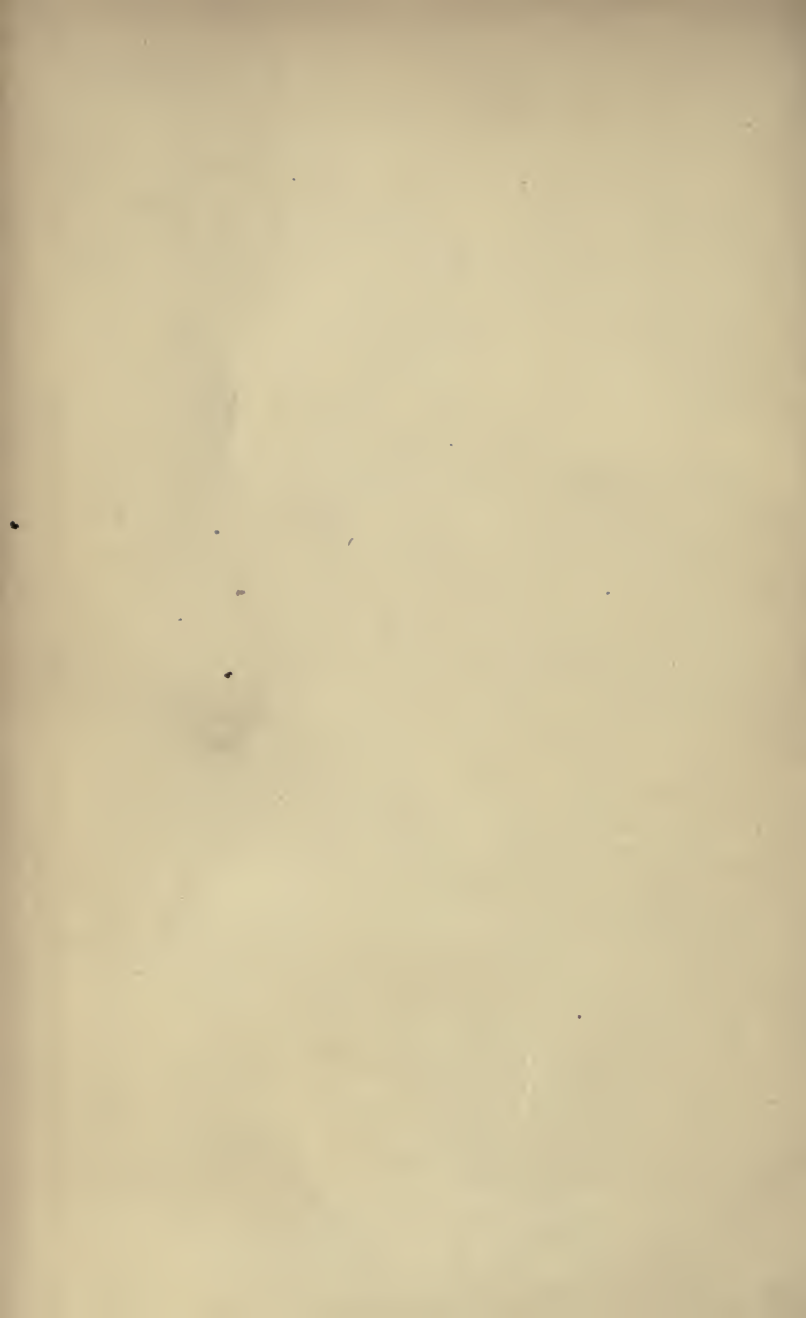
“This grave is that of Eugene Bazarof. Two persons, a husband and his wife, bending under the weight of years, often come from a little neighboring village to visit it; leaning on one another, they slowly approach the railing, fall on their knees, and weep long and bitterly, keeping their eyes long fixed on the mute stone which covers their son; they exchange a few words, wipe away the dust which covers the tombstone, straighten a branch of fir, then begin to pray again, and cannot make up their minds to leave the spot where they believe themselves nearer to their son, nearer to his memory.”

It is plain enough that this author, in the books published here, has shown no very wide range of invention. His stories are, for the most part, ample variations of one theme. These variations are fresh, strong, and sufficiently unlike one another to give the whole work to which they belong an air of newness. Each variation presents some more or less novel aspects of Russian life and manners, as well as several new turns of character. If a dramatist, Turgénieff would compose comedies, of the higher kind, rather than tragedies. As has been intimated, his plots are of the simplest sort, hardly worthy the name; the history of a single passion, the formation, hardening, and manifestation of one or more peculiar dispositions. These things are done with masterly vigor and skill by a pen that with one stroke, as it were, can give you a clear notion of a personage, thus: “He tried to give himself dignified airs, as if he were not a human being, but his own statue erected

by national subscription." In this lively presentation of characters a great part of the interest excited by these stories may be found. But the reader also sympathizes with the lovers, fears the coquette and her works, and is in dread lest she accomplish her evil purposes, break the young girl's heart, and do other irreparable mischief. And yet the attractiveness of these books is a kind of fascination wrought in a subtle manner, hard to define sharply and clearly, by the author's genius, rather than the all-absorbing concern for the progress of the tale and the disentanglement of the plot, in which novel-readers greatly delight.

A French novel in which should be turned to account materials like these which Mr. Turgéniéff uses, would, according to English and American standards, at once be declared immoral. In this respect the quality of a book lies more in the treatment than in the subject-matter; and the Russian's manner of dealing with these questionable things is very different from that most common among Gallic authors. On a thoroughly healthy moral organization his narrations, probably, would produce no deleterious effect; but that they may not be injurious to a different class of readers it would be unsafe to assert. Yet, however opinions as to the merits and demerits of his works may differ, all must agree that, as a man of peculiar genius, of education, of refinement, of lofty aims, and of worthy achievements, Russia has good reason to be proud of him.





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